GROUND

For some readers, this is Welcome Back. For others, just Welcome. To New Orleans, to *Shadowman*, to the darkest, most sinister corner of the spanking clean new Valiant Heroes universe. Because, after all, you can't have bright and new unless you've got dark and ancient *somewhere.* Way before pub-date, we sent out spiffy black-and-white previews of *Shadowman* to a bunch of Known Letter Writers, hoping that they would write us letters. They didn't disappoint us...

Looking for you on the darkside,
– Mad

Madeleine and Gregg:

Thanks for the preview copy of Shadowman #1. It was a pleasant surprise to find this waiting for me this week. The one book I looked most forward to seeing the new Valiant Heroes line after Mark Waid's X-O Manowar, is Shadowman by Garth Ennis.

Garth Ennis has changed the type of comics many people read or even the *brand* they choose, proving that the substance of the story matters more than who the publisher is. Other writers before him obviously have people follow their work no matter what company they script for, but Ennis has a different kind of audience—people who have a strong stomach for violence, depravity, foul language and sick jokes; not for their own sake but to tell a story that grabs you with its realism and shock and holds on to you once you have looked closer and realized that people sometimes talk this way and act this way. Once you allow for the brutal frankness of his style you can't help but notice the way the plots are woven and the characters act and react with more style and realism than any typical run-of-the-mill super hero comic out there.

So I see with Shadowman that Garth put his unique stamp on the concept with the beginnings of a new Shadowman guided by the influence of an old friend who clings to existence with voodoo. The main character is not an ordinary Joe with powers and abilities, yada yada, but then I did not expect him to be. It seems clear there is a war going on with major players being the undead. I hope that eventually we see some old characters return as the plot warrants but that the interaction with other books in the *universe* is kept to a minimum. I am not sure that I like the concept of Zero being a blank slate but I am willing to watch the character develop.

The art in the preview is a bit different since it may rely on the colors to bring out certain aspects. It certainly has a lot of shadow and detailed line work to make it stand out and give a tone to the book. The finished product may give a different aspect to it, but the supernatural quality of the undead is captured very well by Ashley. I am reminded of Sienkiewicz who is unique and always very creative in his technique. It may not be something a lot of fans warm up to, but I think it suits the story just fine.

I look forward to seeing the full color product in November. Thanks again for the preview and best wishes for your success. I will be including a review of the preview in my weekly electronic magazine about comic books, the Comic Book Network Electronic Magazine. Your readers who are computer friendly can find it in the America Online Comics library or on the World Wide Web at: http://members.aol.com/ComicBkNet.

David LeBlanc
ComicBkNet@aol.com

The musical question "Who is Zero really?" may very well take some explaining to answer completely. Can anyone really be *that* cold, or that empty? Not for *us* to tell...

I will admit that I have a bit of a bias here. I've been talking with editor Madeleine Robins for a while now on various subjects that have included, surprise, surprise, the Shadowman revamp. It's because of those conversations that I actually felt a little nervous holding the Shadowman #1 preview. Could I be objective? What if I hated it? What if the build-up just didn't pay off in the finished product? And after about fifteen seconds of this, a little voice said, "Forget that, let's read the darn thing!" And I did.

And it was good. Really good, in fact. The new Shadowman is, as other characters point out, somewhat of a blank slate. A man with no memories and apparently no emotions as well, possessed by the force that creates Shadowmen, about to be plunged into a war between the living and the dead. Of course, there are some that would point out that our man Zero is a little bit of both...

It's interesting—Garth Ennis, even as he presents this, shows that there's more to Zero than the initial glance shows. There's something deep inside—something that, I suspect, will make it a lot easier for the reader to latch onto than Zero's current state. And of course, there's also Ennis's brand of humor that runs through it, resulting in a lot of chuckles at my end.

Ashley Wood's art is stunning. I can already hear the comparisons to Bill Sienkiewicz, and while I love Sienkiewicz's work, Wood's is different. It's hard to say who, if anyone, he really reminds me of, and that's a good thing. Whatever the style, it's very striking, and a delight to examine. (I can't wait to see what it'll look like after Atomic Paintbrush colors it!) And having just seen elsewhere a reproduction of his painted cover for the first issue... Oh, nice.

If I had any doubts about the Shadowman revamp, they're gone. Ennis and Wood have done a wonderful job, and I can't wait to see what they, Jamie Delano, and Robins have in store for us next. It's well worth checking out.

Greg McElhatten
via Genie

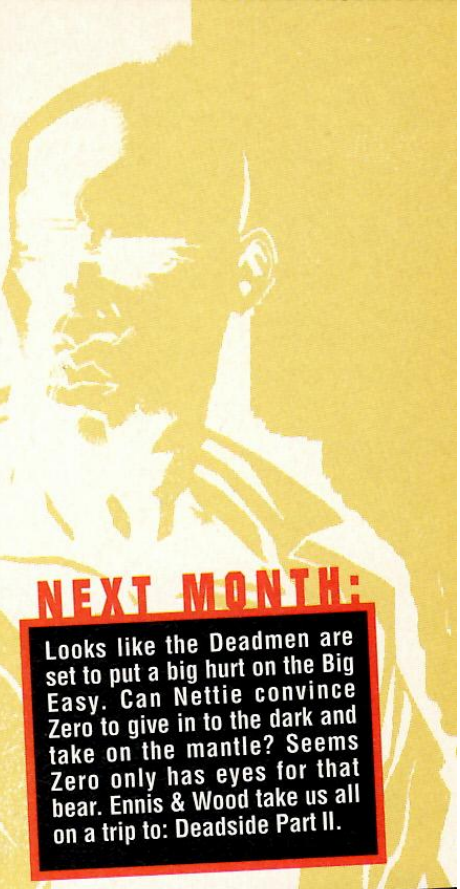
Ah well, another poor soul lost. And hey, if our vote counts, we also think worlds (this one and the next) of our boy Ashley's work!

Dear Madeleine and Gregg,

Thank you very much for the preview. Unfortunately, you've sent it to the wrong person since I'm not the greatest Garth Ennis fan. It's not that I don't think he's a decent writer, but that his celebrated Gothic mayhem is becoming a bit repetitive, variations on a theme: lots of violence (which I'm not necessarily opposed to), walking talking graveyard types (nothing

Cover Painting by ASHLEY WOOD • Design by COMICRAFT

ZERO



particularly novel here considering the medium), an underlying morality that either subverts the sensationalism or reinforces positive values depending on one's point of view, or does both (actually a strength that's created through this ambiguity), and a desire to push it to the limit which was achieved some time ago and is becoming redundant.

What I do like about his writing is that he seems to be having great fun, and that is essentially what it's all about, despite the gore, guts, severed limbs and frat-boy humor. Or maybe because of it. He also has a gift for dialogue and characterization, and it's actually the quieter moments that display this that I enjoy most in his work.

As for Shadowman, I found it a little confusing; too many characters, the black and white format, who knows? A second reading didn't help. This doesn't really bother me, I prefer a story that unfolds over time, and the first issue should tease us enough to cause us to return, it's just that the shock tactics are seemingly supplanting a carefully constructed story. Or, to put it another way, the fingers in the eye sockets, lopped-off heads, and other deliberate visual gaucheries are replacing writing. What may have begun as tongue-in-cheek satire is becoming self-parody.

More than likely, I won't be reading Shadowman, but I wish you and Acclaim luck and I appreciate that you thought to solicit my opinion.

Jeff DeMos
NYC, NY

Good day, Madeleine Robins...Gregg Sanderson,

I appreciate your concern for my opinion regarding "Shadowman". I will interest myself to the forth and coming books of the title; delightfully.

The bedtime supremacy. The last resort. Or is it not? Asleep within the confinement of an ineffable peace there may lurk a certain loom... A shadow. A wake to remind a reality as such consequences; enemy beside enemy... against one. One against all. The haunting possibility of life when death is uncertain. A morbid task of will. A will obliged to follow... Shadowman.

Goodnight,

Nadine Hernandez
Pomona, CA

Dear Madeleine,

Thank you very much for this sneak peek at Shadowman #1. While I'm not particularly all that familiar with artist Ashley Wood, I have been a dedicated follower of writer Garth Ennis's work in the comic book field and it would have been a safe bet to say that I would have bought this book—his first effort for the new and totally revamped Valiant Heroes line of Acclaim Comics—right off the shelves as soon as it would have come out.

Having read the first issue's tale called "Deadside," the urge to see this in color is big enough for me to still eagerly look forward to the moment that this very issue hits the racks. After all, Garth and Ashley have put together what appears to be a highly intriguing yet somewhat unsettling package of horror and action. It has been a while since I have read about the original Shadowman, Jack Boniface, and I never have really cared much about the character itself, but to see Garth open this very issue with Jack's quite lifeless body lying at the city morgue nevertheless was quite a shocking experience.

The idea of a new person having been chosen by powers far beyond anybody's comprehension to fill Jack's shoes as the new Shadowman is a very intriguing one, especially because the new Shadowman called Zero is all but a heroic, admirable kind of fella. He is cruel, deadly and quite sadistic, possibly even psychotic, yet Garth established his character so powerfully that Zero's enigmatic personality seems to be interesting and strong enough to carry the book for the upcoming three issues. The breakneck pace of the action, although sometimes overwhelming, also adds a nice atmosphere to the whole issue—an atmosphere where story and art blend together to weave a magical tapestry of entertaining intrigue in a powerful way.

Everything considered, Shadowman #1 is one of the most entertaining comics I've read in the past months and I'm eternally thankful for having had the privilege of seeing this book before it came out. There's enough potential here to make this new series an instant smash hit, so I really wish everybody the best of luck. Looking forward to issue #2!

Olav Beemer
The Netherlands

And with Olav's warm and fuzzy regards, why don't we all look forward to the next installment of mojo madness from the usual band of weirdos, no?

—Gregg

NEXT MONTH:

Looks like the Deadmen are set to put a big hurt on the Big Easy. Can Nettie convince Zero to give in to the dark and take on the mantle? Seems Zero only has eyes for that bear. Ennis & Wood take us all on a trip to: Deadside Part II.

ON SALE THIS MONTH:

NINJAK #1
With Ninendo 64, Japanese monsters, and Internet surfing already taking up his free time, can Denny Meechum fit in the adventure of his life?
By Busiek, Vokes, and Avon Oeming.

X-O MANOWAR #2
With Rand Banion dead, Donovan Wylie is left to face the savage forces of R.A.G.E.!
By Waid, Augustyn, Chen, and Ryder.

DEBUTING NEXT MONTH:

TUROK #1 (45 page quarterly)
Joshua Fireseed, sophomore slugger, has it all. But when tragedy strikes, Josh must shoulder an ancient burden as protector of a gateway to a lost dimension!
By Nicieza and Kayanan.

TROUBLEMAKERS #1
Christine, Zach, Parker and Jane are normal, well-meaning budding adolescents just trying to fit in. Well, they've also lived their whole lives under the roof of a giant corporation trying to design perfect humans! Now the kids are tired of seclusion and want a typical teenage existence, which can only mean: trouble.
By Nicieza, Martinez, and Rodriguez.

Send your letters to: SHADOWMAN, c/o ACCLAIM COMICS 275 7th Ave New York, NY 10001. Internet: merobins.interport.net
Addresses will be withheld upon request. Letters may be shortened to suit space limitations—sorry!

GROUND

Dear Madeleine and Gregg,

I never knew Jack Boniface. But I feel like maybe I met him briefly at a party, thanks to all the reviews and Internet postings I've read, even though I never bought any issues from the first run of *Shadowman*.

So I come to the new *Shadowman* with no deeply etched preconceptions. Which may be a good thing.

Garth Ennis' script is straight-ahead tough. No holds barred, just as anyone would expect who's read Ennis' other books. Zero doesn't seem too heroic in the first issue, but I'm sure we'll see some interesting character development in the coming months.

Ashley Wood's brushwork is quite a change from the clean-line art that used to mark Valiant's books. It's striking in the preview's black and white format— I'm sure it'll really shine once colors are added. And the brush works well in this New Orleans-steeped story. Adds atmosphere, a craggy moodiness that seems appropriate to the tale and its setting.

Thanks for the preview. I'll be looking for this book when it hits the stands.

Sincerely,
Duane Spurlock
Louisville, KY

From the outset of this series, we intended it to be recognizable to fans of the Jack Boniface Shadowman, and clear to those who have lived without Shadowman in their lives for far too long!

Dear Madeleine,

I read the review copy of the comic you sent me and I'll certainly try to pass it on to others who might write. Now to my own opinion.

Well it ain't perfect but it has got something. Possibly enough to make me want to buy the second issue. I'm not crazy about gratuitous violence in comics, however I'll concede that in this case it may be necessary to establish the characters as 'tough guys.' I think that calling the main character Zero is a mistake. Unless I'm mistaken there was a bad movie earlier this year featuring a black actor with a shaved head playing the part of an android assassin called Zero.

I think that Zero's past is something that should be pumped for everything that it's worth. It should be hinted at darkly and trickled through mean fingers. Personally I think that two-three years wouldn't be too long to wait for the entire picture. Gives the fans something to talk about in the letters column...and I think that the very gradual revelation of Zero's past could give that kind of direction to the strip. Well that's my $0.02 worth. Hope it helps. Be glad to do the same again sometime. See ya,

Nelsius Bresnan
Limerick, Ireland

I think, Nelsius, you are confusing a comic which *comes out* every month with a movie which *lasted* about a month.

Dear Madeleine and Gregg,

I always liked *Shadowman*. Jack was a pretty cool guy. Of course, now he's dead so he will no longer be *Shadowman*. So that was the first adjustment. The opening scene was pretty funny, in a very morbid sense. The description of Jack's body was pretty gross!

I'm not sure if I am going to like the new *Shadowman*. Zero seems...well I don't know what to think of him yet. He seems like he's not all there, if you know what I mean. The whole scene with the bear was strange.

The writing is very good. The art is not my usually preferred style, but it looks kind of interesting. I will check it out, though. As I posted on AOL, I'd recommend this book for fans of the *Spectre* and DC's Vertigo line.

It will be very interesting to see how this book fits into the rest of the new Valiant universe.

Sincerely,
Chad Walter
3087 Meadowlands Ct.
Sparks, NV 89431

What Garth does with that bear...oh, it's very nice. And since when did death preclude one from becoming Shadowman?

Dear Madeleine Robins,

Thank you for sending me the advance copy of *Shadowman* #1, it made my day. Of all the Valiant books *Shadowman* was always my favorite. What I liked the most about the original series was the New Orleans-at-night atmosphere, especially from the early issues.

The new *Shadowman* started out with a bang! Jack Boniface is dead and defiled. The first two pages immediately reminded me of Moore's 'Anatomy Lesson'. In fact, as I continued to read I was reminded of things, or more specifically, I became distracted by Garth Ennis' usual bag of references: Tarantino, Lynch, and characters talking about old TV shows.

Zero is an intriguing character. A 'blank slate' who has been designed to be a cold, killing-machine, yet he is a living, breathing, vulnerable human being trying to unlock his past. The bar scene with the teddy bear motif was both powerful and unexpected. On the other hand, the violence was not as powerful, nor

Cover Painting by ASHLEY WOOD • Design by COMICRAFT

ZERO

was it as unexpected—I guess I've become desensitized to the multitude of Garth 'Arse' Ennis books currently on the shelves. I'll definitely give this book a shot as long as the story remains tight and dynamic, and the violence does not become the main character.

The artwork provides a dark and muddy atmosphere, which works well with the story; I miss the New Orleans feel that the previous book had, however. I'm interested in seeking how the colored art looks. Will the pages be even murkier or will the color be more dynamic and assaultive? I hope the color's not too muted and depressing. I'll let you know what I think when I see the final product!

Sincerely,
M. Gaetz
N.Vancouver Canada

Look for more New Orleans feel as we go, kids. Remember, it's bad enough the people creating this book are totally deranged, they're *foreign*, too.

Dear Madeleine,

Thanks for the preview copy, I feel all warm and special now. Actually, I'd already put in an order for *Shadowman #1* at my local comic shop, so you know I was pretty sure it would be a winner. The advance copy confirmed my suspicion.

Previously, I had only seen a little of Ashley Wood's work (I won't mention where), but even that small sample provided half the reason to give *Shadowman* a go. I was attracted by his sheer harshness and nastiness, reminiscent of early Greg Capullo and the horror art of Bill Sienkiewicz. Wood's art for *Shadowman* #1 was even tastier, indicating that he's better working alone than with an inker. In fact, his b/w was so good that it's hard to see how colour could improve it. He certainly made the comic live up to its name with his copious use of black, creating a menacing world of half-seen faces and impenetrable shadow. New Orleans is the perfect city setting, with its alluring reputation for danger and mystery.

The other half of the reason to try *Shadowman* was the presence of dear old Garth, of course. Ashley Wood is possibly the best collaborator he has yet had in terms of artistic suitability. The writer/artist chemistry was just perfect, and if they can produce this kind of quality off the bat, imagine what they'll be capable of when they've worked together for a few issues.

There was everything in the story that I had expected from Garth Ennis: the guns, the drugs, the raw black humour, the focus on conversation, the periods of ominous calm punctuated by occasional bloodbaths.

Maybe his most distinguished trademark is introducing the weirdest of supernatural characters and juxtaposing their very existence with the colloquial idiomatic speech they employ. Their use of everyday language brings them closer to the reader and thereby allows Ennis to double the impact of their inherent humour, violence or pathos. The acts of atrocity committed by Tommy Lee have twice the effect because we've just shared the nostalgia of a Dukes Of Hazzard singalong (well, I did). There are promises of magic here, and I am eager to find out the cause of (Zero's) soullessness, and why he has been chosen as the new *Shadowman*. The voodoo backdrop really goes down a treat with me. Forget this techno-sorcery that's all the rage, the things that go best with magic are sex and drink—and that's voodoo in a nutshell.

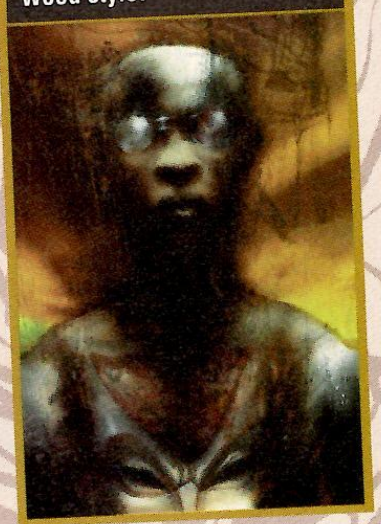
So skewer me a kewpie doll, I'll be back for *Shadowman #2*.

Toby Ingram
England, UK

Great letter, Toby. Sorry we had to chop it some (yeah, it was *that* long). And we'll put another Barbie on the barbie for you!

NEXT MONTH:

Has Zero embraced the shadow only to kiss dirt forever? Better pray not, for Josey's sake. More warmth and fuzziness Ennis and Wood style!



ALSO ON SALE NEXT MONTH:

MAGNUS #1

Say goodbye to the 'net, the ATM, the VCR and all those cool electronic toys. Magnus is here today, and technology is GONE tomorrow!
By Tom Peyer, Mike McKone, and Mark McKenna.

MAN OF THE ATOM

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GROUND

In order to show off some behind-the-scenes design work by Charlie Adlard, we've only got one page for letters this time (we also thought you might want a break from yet more letters on issue #1—letters on #2 next time!). In the meantime, here's a final sampling of reactions to our premier issue:

Dear Sir,

I do confess that I never did bother to read the original volume of *Shadowman*. I just didn't think that Jack Boniface was that great of a character. I'm not at all disapointed that he died. In fact, it should've happened sooner.

I do have enormous respect for Garth Ennis. He is one of the greatest writers in the comic book medium. The second volume of *Shadowman* is off to a great start. Keep up the good work.

Sincerely,

Steven Post Hitchcock
5606 Dumfries Court West
Dublin, OH 43220

Dear Madeleine:

Re: *Shadowman* #1 ("Deadside")

I thought I would drop you a line concerning this book and found that I could sum it up in one word, no make that three: confusing, yet intriguing. I will admit I took up the title because Garth was scripting with Jamie following, but I found this first issue to be not very user-friendly. There was not much info. on what the Shadowman was all about and I felt that I had wandered into the wrong neghborhood where I did not know any of the kids there.

Ashley's pencils were interesting to say the least, and I look forward to seeing more of his work. I also felt that there could have been more dialogue to ease us newcomers into the arena, so as not to feel quite as alienated as I did. That's not to disrespect Garth, as he can attest to the amount of times I bug him with letters of praise.

Zero, well, what can I say about him? Not a great deal from this issue, other than he's a stone cold killer with no past who stares at a teddy bear and drinks vodka. Oh, and that voodoo queen or whoever she is, wants him to be the next Shadowman.

Also, I felt that the page layout was very stark, I liked it but I got the feeling that there could have been more done. The coloring was kind of neat, but I felt that it needed a little sharpening up.

Don't worry, you raised enough questions in this issue to make me come back for issue two, so as I can at least find out a bit more about Zero, and what Tommy Lee Bones wants from New Orleans.

In any case, I will wait impatiently for issue #2 and let you know my thoughts on how you guys are getting along. Oh, and before I leave, one more thing: the cover painting was excellent.

See you next month on the Deadside!

Tony Favro
43 Monique Drive
Langwarrin, Victoria
3910 Australia

Have we been neglecting to mention that our startling covers are lovingly crafted by Ashley Wood, and the variant cover for #1 by the dashing Vince Evans? Oops.

Dear Madeleine and Gregg,

I must be honest. Until Fabian's revamp of the Valiant Universe I didn't care about the characters at Acclaim. I thought it was just another company full of second-raters created by people that no one really care about. I will admit that was a bit off with the old Valiant, but I never felt it was worth it before. Whether or not this stands about the old, the new has so far been excellent. I really enjoyed *Shadowman* #1 for a few reasons.

1. Garth Ennis. I really love Garth on *Hitman* at DC, and I personally think he's one of the very best writers on the market right now. He creates wonderful books with great dialogue, wonderful characterization, and tangible atmosphere. He reaches an equilibrium of serious drama, violence, and humor and ties it into one great package. This was no different. Zero is a great new start, and I think he's a great way to begin this new book. The way it opened, I remember the old *Shadowman* character. He was a superhero, plain and simple. You're arrested with that same man laying in the morgue, beaten and mutilated beyond reason. This was wonderfully done, the way it hits you.

2. Ashley Wood. I'd only seen his work once before, but I was really impressed in this book. He created some shocking images, dark and moody, that fit perfectly with the book. The cover was also wonderful.

3. The styling. I think this one also belongs to Garth. The styling he puts into the books every time he writes is amazing. Garth is Irish? I know this, but he wrote a book that could have been written by a full-fledged American. But, as I have said before, Garth is a master at atmosphere.

I do have one complaint, though. The lettering. Oh, don't get me wrong. The lettering was excellent, being very clean. I love Comicraft and I wish they'd do more. but the problem is just what I said earlier. It's too clean. Ashley's art doesn't use many straight lines, and the story is a dirty one. It would have been better to get a human letterer to do it. But, that aside, I must give *Shadowman* a solid 9. Thank you for putting out a line of new, refreshing comics for us, and I intend to be reading from Acclaim for a long time to come.

Sincerely,

Adam Holmberg
207 E. Minnesota
Spring Valley, Il 61362

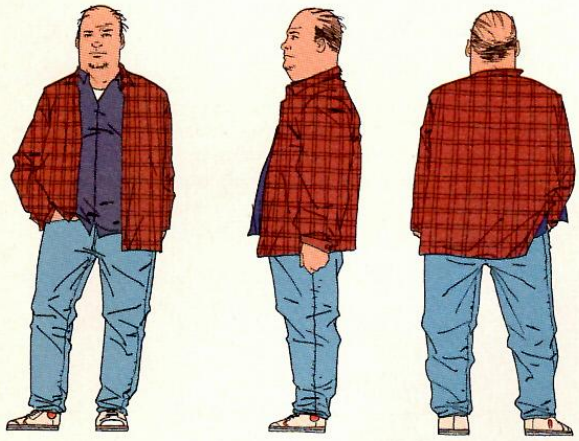
Thanks for the kind words, Adam. We may not strike the right note every time out, but we're trying our best to kick out a high-quality line of comics for a variety of tastes and sensibilities. Please keep letting us know how we're doing.

—Gregg

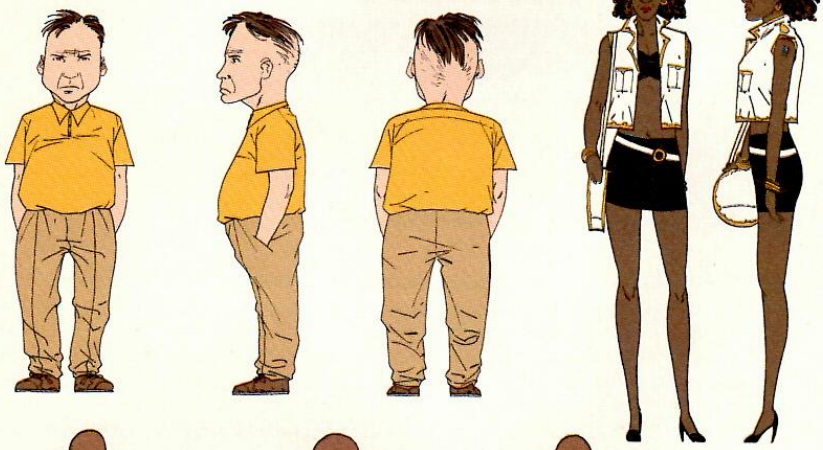
This Issue's Spectacular Cover: Who else? ASHLEY WOOD dunnit.
Cover layout, logo & letters page design: COMICRAFT

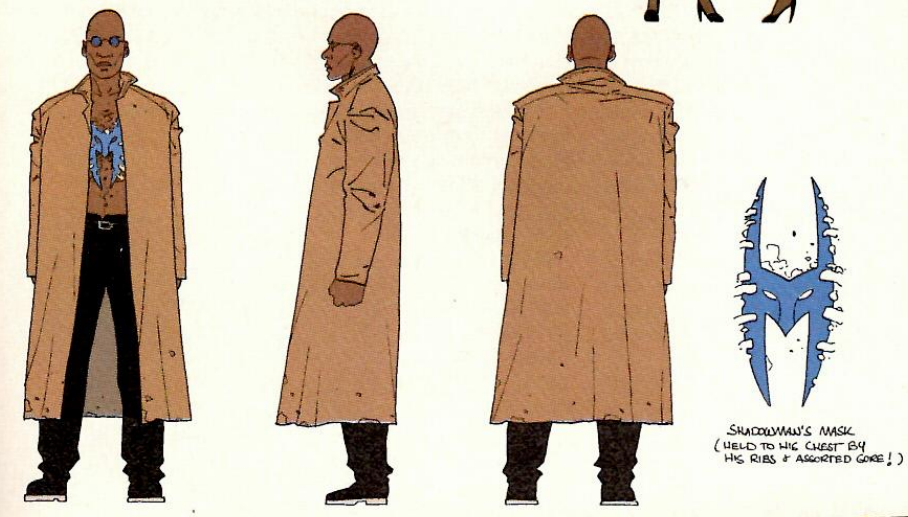
ZERO

For your snooping pleasure, on this page you'll find a sampling of morsels. These pieces are character design sheets done up by Charlie Adlard (more on him next time) and, of course, the crew at Atomic Paintbrush. You're sure to recognize some of the characters, and not have met the others. Or *have* you...?



ALTHOUGH THIS WOMAN IS BEAUTIFUL- THERE IS A CERTAIN AGE/WISDOM TO HER ....
BECAUSE OF HER AWFULL TASTE IN CLOTHES CAN I SUGGEST A WHITE WITH GOLD TRIM COLOUR SCHEME TO HER JACKET / BELT / BAG ?





SHADOWMAN'S MASK (HELD TO HIS CHEST BY HIS RIBS & ASSORTED GORE!)

DEBUTING THIS MONTH:

MAN OF THE ATOM
A 40-PAGE SPECIAL EVENT
Helena and Frank Seleski have spent their lives searching for The Answers in very different ways. Will they find God's grace, or the most powerful Valiant character in existence?
By Warren Ellis, Darick Robertson, and Larry Mahlstedt.

DEBUTING NEXT MONTH:

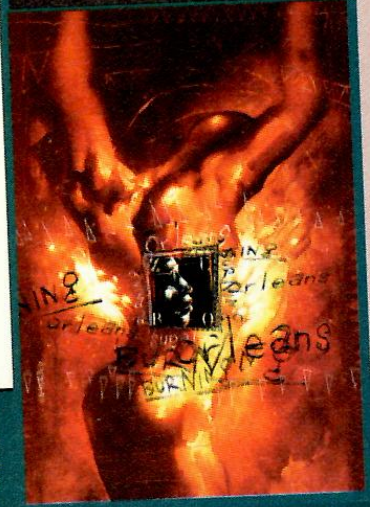
ETERNAL WARRIORS: "TIME AND TREACHERY" (QUARTERLY)
This 48-page epic revitalizes the Valiant Universe pantheon of immortals, led by brothers Gilad, Ivar, and Aram! These near-Gods walk among us, practicing espionage and dark politics. But someone is out there proving even an immortal can die. Who dares stalk *these* Warriors?
By Holcomb, Tropea-Wheatley, and Floyd.

QUANTUM & WOODY #1
Their tag-line says all you need to know: "The World's *Worst* Superhero Team." It's damn-funny-laugh-out-loud-embarrass-yourself-on-mass-transit stuff.
By Priest, Bright, and Adams.

MAGNUS #1
Say goodbye to the 'net, the ATM, the VCR and all those cool electronic toys. Magnus is here today, and technology is GONE tomorrow!
By Tom Peyer, Mike McKone, and Mark McKenna.

NEXT MONTH:

All of New Orleans is at stake, and you are ring-side for the main event: Zero toe-to-toe with Tommy Lee and the Deadmen! Who owns the night? Also, Zero shakes Nettie down for some answers. Now that she's got her perfect Shadowman, can she keep him? And there's someone checking *out* of a graveyard you just don't want to miss. Deadside slams to a conclusion, courtesy of Ennis and Wood.



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Addresses will be withheld upon request. Letters may be shortened to suit space limitations—sorry!

GROUND

The sun rises over the Mississippi, and Our Hero orders... yes...*a beer*. But if you're set for Zero to live happily ever after, remember: 1) he's not alive; 2) Nettie's down in St. Louis Cemetary No. 1 conjuring Jack Boniface back from Deadside... And who has brought us to this pass? Garth Ennis and Ashley Wood. Thank you, Garth. Thank you, Ashley. Garth, who has many other fish to fry, was always scheduled to leave Shadowman after issue #4. Ashley will be back, but he gets some time off for good behavior, for making (most of) his deadlines, and to rest his inking hand, which is very tired by now.

In their stead, we are delighted to say, please welcome Jamie Delano (of *Hellblazer* glory) and Charles Adlard (of *X-Files*, among other...). Is their take on *Shadowman* different? Yes. Is it one whit less cool, dark, violent, horrific, and nightmarish? *I don't think so.*

Stay tuned. This is where it gets *good*.

—Mad

Dear Ground Zero,

Shadowman #2 was Earth-shattering. Garth and Ashley are doing a wonderful job on this book and I can't wait to see how the first story arc, Deadside, turns out. I love this book and I've only read three issues!

Zero is a very cool character. I am a little confused about what is happening with his bear, but I have to admit, it is a pretty cool bear! I never have read any of the first Shadowman series, so I was wondering about Jack Boniface. Is he the first Shadowman? I thought he was the only other Shadowman, but Nettie talked about there being more than just one. Can you clear this up for me, please?

Garth has got to be one of the world's finest writers! I am a new follower to Garth's work. I started with buying *The Demon*, then I followed him to *Preacher*, *Hitman*, *Bloody Mary*, and now here I am. I have bought a lot of Garth's *Hellblazer* back issues and I could conclude, from the moment I heard he was going to write *Shadowman*, that this sounded like it would be the book for him!

Ashley Wood is awesome! Ashley's artwork is tremendously wonderful! The artwork fits in perfectly with the story and characters and gives the book a dark, spooky approach!

Thanks for reading my long letter. I am a big fan so keep up the good work. I'll try my best to write you every issue.

Your Pal On The Deadside,
Rob Haney
Machesney Park, IL

Jack Boniface was definitely *not* the first Shadowman. If you pay attention here (and especially in an upcoming Turok special—hint, hint), you just might spot one of Jack's voudoun predecessors. We're all hoping, of course, that Zero is the last Shadowman for a long while yet. Now if we can just convince Boniface of that... The next letter comes from someone commenting on both *Shadowman* #2 and #5, the latter of which we sent out to some people as a sneak peek (the price of being a dedicated letter writer). We've stricken the part that gives away serious revelations.

Dear Sir.

Ever heard the phrase be careful what you ask for, you just might get it? If Zero (or Mike) ever desired to be a hero, he may be getting second thoughts right now. If @#$%& is/are screwing him over, then what hope does he have against the criminal underworld?

It's nice to know that *Shadowman* volume 2, number 5 still follows continuity. Sure I never liked Jack Boniface, but it's nice to know that this comic still takes the time to acknowledge his existence.

By the way, didn't the first volume of *Shadowman* end with Jack Boniface taking a swan dive from the skyscraper? In Volume 2, he didn't end up as street pizza. No, he survived his suicidal dive into the sidewalk only to be dismembered by zombies. Ouch. I wonder if there is a Murphy's Law of Failed Suicides about this sort of situation.

Now for the requests. Will any of the villians from volume 1 of *Shadowman* be appearing in volume 2? Will there be any appearances of Dr. Mirage and his loving wife? I understand that they are linked to the original Shadowman in a roundabout sort of way. If Dr. Mirage doesn't appear, then will you be releasing a new comic entitled *The Third Life of Dr. Mirage* anytime soon?

I have now read issue #1 and #5 of *Shadowman* volume 2 and it's much better than the entire 43-issue run of the first volume. Keep up the good work.

Sincerely,
Steven Post Hitchcock
Dublin, Ohio

Yes, Jack Boniface survived a *really* high fall, just to get mangled by the Dead Men. It's not a walk in the park to be a Shadowman. Sure beats gettin' cloned though... No plans yet to bring back this universe's (yes, *this* universe; you *have* read the *Man of the Atom* Event issue, right?) version of the Mirages just yet.

Dear Gregg,
Re: *Shadowman #2*

I don't know. Garth has been attacked numerous times for gratuitious violence and I've always disagreed but this time... In issue 1 Tommy Lee Bones killed some people and we saw what a bad guy he was. This time we saw him kill a cop (which **was** funny) then we had the mock trial sequence which was a complete waste of space and seemed like either padding to make the full four issues or indulgence on Garth's part. It added nothing to the plot, gave us no insights into any characters and wasn't even original to comics (see Starlin's *Warlock*). Why was it there? The other instances of violence are all justifiable in my book, including the gruesome "making a Shadowman sequence," but this little episode spoiled the book for me.

Don't get me wrong, I loved the issue 5 preview and the first issue and I'm certainly not giving up on Garth (love *Preacher*).

Artwise, this issue was as good as the first. I don't know how fast Ashley Wood is (with a fill-in on 5-8), but I do know that it's perfect for this book. Every four issues is better than none! His version of Shadowman is better than Bob Hall's—that's quite something. The atmosphere is perfect, the colours fit in well—but they're unnecessary. Why not try four issues in black and white—adults don't need colours to attract them, and the art will work even better (perhaps) without it.

The story is developing well—I'm looking forward to seeing how you get from issue 2 to 5. Shadowman's con-

Cover Painting by **ASHLEY WOOD**
Cover layout, logo, and letters page design by **COMICRAFT**

ZERO

cept seems to have changed slightly—more "Vertigo," and I hope that this and Garth's stint will increase sales and profile. The exact nature of his abilities and duties will hopefully become apparent over the next several months. It seems to be somewhat like Morpheus in that old DC book, no bad thing in terms of reputation. I just hope you avoid the temptation to drag in the usual dead people (i.e. JFK and Hendrix). Focus on the character of Zero and let the plots develop from there. I always thought that Englehart's rising and advancing of a spirit in MOKF was a pretty good theme for a series and hopefully you've got something similiar planned. You can only take so much horror before it starts to lose its appeal and its meaning. It's a fine line between too much and enough.

Despite all these gripes the series seems to be shaping up quite nicely. Good luck, take care and I'll write again next month, hopefully in a more positive vein!

Yours sincerely,

Paul Hayward
Milton Keynes, England

I suppose by MOKF you're referring to *Master of Kung Fu*? I'll have to agree with you by default—I never read the series. As far as Deadside goes, we will try to resist the reflex to write in all those famous dead people we'd like to meet, though Zero playing himself in "Abbott and Costello Meet the Zombie" has a ring to it. You groove (hip assistant editor lingo) to Ashley's *Shadowman* better than Hall's version, huh? That's certainly high praise. Speaking of Ashley, I'll not let slide this opportunity to clear up a confusion over Ashley's gender. According to many reliable sources, including both Ashley and his *wife*, it seems that our loveable Ashley Wood is 100% Australian male!

Hi Everyone,

I brought home my copy of the new *Shadowman*, put on some Deadman Blues (how apropos) and kicked back to see what the pages held for me. My first reaction to reading *Shadowman* #1 was: what in the world is Ennis doing here? Don't get me wrong, I love the man, but can he write the nuances of the City That Care Forgot? I know he's a master at smart-ass remarks, tons of violence and all-around great writing, but I was shocked to see his work in these pages (probably because I never keep up with who's doing what in the comic industry).

I missed out on the original series' run's ending in my cross-country track leaving South Dakota and wasn't sure what Garth had to begin with. I guess it didn't matter since it's obvious that Boniface is dead (but with New Orleans's reputation I wouldn't bet on gone). I was disappointed. I really liked the guy. Maybe I'm prejudiced in his favor. I play Jazz sax too. I enjoyed the dichotomy between Jack's normal life and Shadowman's existence.

Still, Garth perked my interests enough with Zero. I'm not sure how this character is going to shape up, but that can be a good thing. This man has to have some sort of past. You just don't stare into the eyes of a teddy bear with that haunted look otherwise. Half the fun is probably going to be finding out what makes this man tick and what's going to motivate him to be Shadowman.

I'm afraid the art left me cold. I've always been a fan of more finely detailed stuff, but that's more a style choice than a criticism. At least I could figure out the ethnic background of our new hero which is more than I could say for Boniface. Even my friend who just happened to be a Black Creole from New Orleans never twigged onto the fact Jack shared his ancestry until they said so outright. Maybe the art will grow on me, but as is, it's not enough to turn me off totally.

I'm looking forward to seeing where you go with this. New Orleans alone is a city full of history and makes for a wonderful backdrop for this sort of character. Just don't spread yourself too thin. I'd rather see you full strength on one title than diluted over several! Anyhow, pop open a Dixie Blackened Voodoo Lager (excellent stuff), and lead us on the journey I know you're capable of. I'll sit back with a Voodoo of my own and savor every minute it.

Dana Evans
Columbus, OH

You'll be seeing more of New Orleans starting next issue, Dana. And while we don't see The Wild at Heart quite sophistcated enough to serve such a fine brew as you mention (I picture Josey's setup routine consisting of running out derelicts and figuring how to water down a keg of Hooers Light), I asked Madeleine "Sapphire Sultana" Robins her thoughts on the matter. She turned her single-malt scotch sniffer up at me and scoffed, "I don't speak beer. *Somebody* in this operation has to have class." Hmph.

—Gregg

DEBUTING NEXT MONTH:

BLOODSHOT #1

"Behold a Pale Horseman." Bloodshot arrives in the new Valiant Universe with an unholy vengeance! Once known as Raymond Garrison, a.k.a. Angelo Mortalli, he's now the walking dead man called Bloodshot. His first move: discover why the mob took his life, and the government took his soul!

By Len Kaminski, Sal Velluto, and Jeff Albrecht.

TRINITY ANGELS #1

Clip this recipe to your shopping list: 3 portions of Charlie's Angels, a dollop of Ghostbusters, a dash or three of Hong Kong cinema, and mix it up like you're John Woo! Other optional ingredients (but we put them all in for you): magic gems, fun, skimpy outfits, real pretty art, fun, and much mayhem! Did we mention fun?

Concocted by Kevin Maguire and Dan Panosian.

NEXT MONTH:

Zero has survived his baptism of fire as the new Shadowman, and shaken off the shackles of Nettie's influence. Now what? Well, Zero starts to learn that what is real in the world of voodoo is a very relative concept. And old Jack Boniface might want to have some words with Zero about a concept called ownership! The *Shadowman* vehicle takes a turn off-kilter (yes, even for *Shadowman*), as Jamie Delano and Charlie Adlard spin the first part of the four-part "Nothing is True."

Send your letters to: SHADOWMAN, c/o ACCLAIM COMICS 275 7th Ave New York, NY 10001. Internet: merobins.interport.net
Addresses will be withheld upon request. Letters may be shortened to suit space limitations—sorry!

GROUND

Okay, so I've got a weakness for stories that keep you off balance. I go back and watch The Draughtsman's Contract trying to persuade myself that someday I'll really understand what's going on—and come away a little closer to the truth each time, and a little farther too. I like stories that acknowledge that we all tell our own truths—but that my truth may be your lie, and vice, certainly, versa.

Which brings us to "Nothing is True," in which Jamie Delano and Charlie Adlard tackle Zero and his...identity problems. Because Mike's truth is clearly not Josey's—or Nettie's. And when you're dealing with the tangle of power, obligation and illusion that is voudoun, truth can get as slippery as an alligator duppie... Personally, I'm tickled to have Jamie and Charlie on board, scaring the daylights out of Zero (and me, too). How about y'all?

—Mad

Dear Shadowman:

What a strange legacy I face with this story. From Jack Boniface to Zero. From superhero to horror. If someone told me this could be done, I would have said..."sure," in a sarcastic way. Now if you told me that you were bringing Garth Ennis into the picture, I would have said..."wow!" This comic simply amazes me. Every once in a while, I have to dig up my old *Shadowman* comics and compare them with the new Shadowman and I'm left in awe in the way the story now continues. Absolutely brilliant! *Shadowman* #3 was a real treat, and the cover was horrific and caught my eye right off. The story had my hair standing on end as I saw the dead frantically complaining about broken necks and eyes popping out of sockets.

Zero has a lot to comtemplate as he is now a creature that has one foothold in the world of the dead and one foothold in the world of the living. He doesn't have to eat, sleep, shower or shave. What a lucky guy, I would like to skip the showers, but of course I shower once a month, if I need it or not. Seeing Zero with that teddy bear is real creepy and throws off his enemies. A guy with a teddy bear, what harm could he do? Then seeing Zero breaking some nasal cartridge, I knew right off this guy is dangerous. What has my curiosity in a uproar is the fact that Zero was a college student and majoring in English and he goes into a coma and wakes up a full-fledged killer. I can't wait for the details.

This is a very fascinating comic and I will be along for the ride, through the whole duration! The artwork is gothic and has a very spooky element. Ashley Wood is the right artist for this comic. The setting is perfect...New Orleans. I went to the '82 Mardi Gras and I'm looking forward to seeing Zero at the '97 Mardi Gras. This will be one helluva a party! New Orleans is famous for its Voodoo, witches, zombies and ghosts and I know the new Shadowman has a lot in store for him in New Orleans. Keep up the excellent work Garth!! Give me more!!

Paul Dale Roberts
60 Parkshore Circle
Sacramento, CA 95831
probert2@rhb.dhs.cahwnet.gov

Paul, if you do run into Zero at Mardi Gras, try not to mention the whole shower-once-a-month thing. He'll probably shoot you on the spot. Now, if being trampled by hordes of wierdly-garbed people, liquored up or medicated on the hip, feel-good, go-club-bing-with-the-fashion-crowd, drug of the week, while you bleed onto French Quarter cobblestones is your idea of a good time, rock on!

Dear Gregg,

This issue was a bit of a let down for me. The art was as good as it has been, the expressions on Zero's face on pages 10-11 were worth the price of the book by themselves. No, the problem wasn't with the art. It was the story which was the major let down. We learned too much too quickly, and as a result all the revelations lost their impact. The coincidental meeting with Luke, for example. If this had happened a few issues down the line, or at least not immediately after some of the secrets of Shadowman it might have had more impact. As it was I just thought "YEAH, SO?"—NOT THE REACTION YOU WERE HOPING FOR! Then to follow it up with the car accident—well what's the point in calling him "Zero" when we know all about him bar his shoe size? I know that a Wolverine-type mystery, revelations, hints and convolutions can be boring, but this was all too much too soon. Is this why Garth reportedly said he wasn't happy with what Valiant did to his work, because as I've seen in issue #5's preview all may not be as it appears. GOOD! Leave his origin at least a partial mystery. We even know the meaning of the damn bear and it's only issue #3.

Anyway, these gripes apart, the issue held up well! It may not be the perfect book, but it seems to be an honest try. The usual Ennis touches were to be found here (Irish character, violence, but surprising little "bad" language. An editorial or authorial decision?) Although, again I didn't feel any danger when the bartender was upside down. In fact so much had happened by this point that I was beyond caring. Or maybe Garth's becoming a little bit too one note in his writing and I'm getting immune to depictions of violence in comic form? The lettering was excellent as ever, the different fonts for different characters adding to both the visual and comprehensibility of the story.

The colouring, on the other hand, is a distraction. Nothing against Atomic Paintbrush, if you're going to have colour, then by all means let it be by them. So, all in all a disappointing issue. I know that better is to come, having seen issue #5 (in black and white!) I hope that the book lives up to its potential. The Valiant line will survive if different genres are well represented. Speaking of which—where's *Armed And Dangerous*?

Paul Hayward
Old Brook, England

I don't think you'll say we're feeding you all the answers too quickly after Jamie and Charlie are done with this story arc, Paul. With all things voodoo and magical, illusion is a powerful currency. As for *Armed & Dangerous* and black and white comics in general, in today's perilous times for the comics industry, the market is not quite healthy enough to support even such sterling series as *A & D*(that was my and Madeleine's book and we miss it terribly—though Bob Hall is still working on it, so you never know!), so get used to Atomic's muted, spooky palette—we think it works right nicely.

Dear Ground Zero,

What I like about Shadowman is the strange blend of the normal and paranormal. Okay, the idea of the hero being a killer isn't "normal." But Garth has made Zero a surprisingly sympathetic character despite the cold-blooded efficiency required of his job. The now-classic bear scene in *Shadowman* #1 demonstrated he is still a human being who's trying to remember his past and thus better understand who he is. By the way, it took me a couple of re-reads of that issue before I realized the image in the bear's eye is a gate made of human bones. What's really cool is how Zero's death revealed the significance of the image: it's the gate to Deadside. This is the perfect lead-in to Zero's discovery of his past and new powers. I know there will be gripes about revealing Zero's origin so early, but this move will only help enhance the character. Everyone can relate to someone who had parents, a little brother, and a promising future in college.

As for the paranormal, I haven't seen such a strange collection of weird creatures in a comic since *Xombi* and *Curse of the Spawn*. Tommy Lee Bones and the Dead Men are a hoot because they are strangely down-to-earth for a bunch of murderous, psychotic zombies. The character who steals the show is Jaunty. Why has no one ever thought about taking a snake's body and attaching it to a human skull complete with top hat? Add in Jaunty's frankness and wisecracks, and you have the makings of a great supporting character.

Unlike some, the gore in the first couple of

Cover Painting by ASHLEY WOOD
Cover layout, logo, and letters page design by COMICRAFT

ZERO

issues of *Shadowman* didn't really gross me out. Partly, this is because these two issues can't match the gore level in *Curse of the Spawn* #1. The other reason is Garth lessens some of the bloodbaths' impact with a brand of humor similar to that in the *Mars Attacks*! movie. You know you shouldn't laugh at the death and destruction, but do so anyway. If Garth and Jamie Delano can maintain this balance of horror and humor, *Shadowman* will definitely keep my interest for the next 50, 100, or so issues.

Before I go, I must commend Ashley Wood on the art for *Shadowman*. His style reminds me of John McCrea though it's somehow edgier, which perfectly compliments the series. I'm curious if Ashley is responsible for the covers. If so, I'm deeply impressed. Ashley is in a league with such long-time painters as Alex Ross and *Star Wars*'s Hugh Fleming because his covers have an almost photographic quality to them. This beats foil enhancements any day.

That's my critique for now. With his knowledge of being manipulated from the start by Nettie, Zero's destiny has become a lot more uncertain. I wait for the story to really go into overdrive in *Shadowman* #4. Thanks guys for helping restore my faith in comics and expand the potential of the medium.

Frederick D. Weaver
1715 Highwood Place, S.E.
Washington, DC 20020

Is it just me, or are people just a little too jealous of Zero's lack of obligation to bathe? Regarding cover enhancements, here at Undead Central, Madeleine and I consider an Ashley Wood piece just the right kind of medicated goo for your ripped-off-by-marketing-gimmicks-blues.

Hey Deadsiders,

Well, picked up #3 today with no real plans on rushing to read it. It's Friday after all, time to cut loose. But when it's 30 below out, I decided I could boot-scoot another night, drew myself a real hot bath, poured some Irish Cream Liquor to warm up with and relaxed with *Shadowman* (if you can say anything Garth writes is relaxing).

This was a bit unexpected. I hadn't planned on learning so much about Zero so fast. I'm finally able to feel for him a little. I like him, and I'm looking forward to seeing how he embraces the powers of Shadowman. The story has me hooked. I loved the touch with the teddy bear, both as a link to Deadside and as a link to poor Luke. Well done.

I'll confess to a liitle disgruntled growling when I got to the coma part. I just hate the "wake up from the coma with new powers" plot device. People simply decay away in comas, BUT since Nettie was "teaching" Mikey to kill while he was comatose I'll buy into her magic sustaining his body in a usable condition. I'm looking forward to Zero getting some answers out of Nettie, who's much more wicked and formidable in this incarnation.

Jaunty's an Irish spirit? Neat way of "writing what you know," Garth. I find him easily fasinating. I'm still not convinced Garth can write New Orleans well, but since we've only seen the bar, Deadside, and a few dark roadways, I'll refrain from passing judgment yet. She's a deadly decaying beauty, that city is, and I've always been drawn to her.

I'm not thrilled with the art, but my taste in illustration is somewhat narrow. In all fairness, the cover art is great. It caught my eye immediately. I picked up the first issue before I even knew what it was because of the captivating covers.

Here's hoping Garth is wrong about what awaits us once we die. Until next time.

Dana Evans
Columbus, OH 43232

Dear Madeleine and Gregg,

Shadowman #3 finally offered its readers exactly the right elements that the current story arc needed so badly. After two issues filled with the smallest of clues and the most vague of hints, in the third chapter of "Deadside," writer Garth Ennis finally reveals the most important aspects of Zero's origin.

And truth to be told, that was what the book needed to keep it from getting extremely superficial and, in the end, possibly even boring. While I must admit that the first two issues of this very comic book series have been very entertaining, the overabundant violence in those issues seemed to occur with neither rhyme nor reason. No clues were given as to why Zero acted the way he did and his personality remained far from three-dimensional.

Fortunately, Garth Ennis seems to have acknowledged this as well. The flashback scenes presented in the issue at hand have finally revealed that one pivotal turning point in Zero's life—or rather, in Mike's life. Combining some wonderful storytelling with the always powerful and evocative artwork from Ashley Wood, Garth has managed to give that much-needed third dimension to Mike's personality. Granted, the character still has a long way to go, but as a start, this is more than just a "good start." While the idea of a family being killed in a car crash isn't innovative, for the current Shadowman it's enough to back up his violent actions with a driving motivational force, and that's just what I had been missing over the past two months. On top of that, this might be the rich soil upon which future issues are able to develop Mike's personality even further. Actually, with Jamie Delano as the next writer of this book, I'm downright positive that's going to happen.

So, in retrospect, I think *Shadowman* #3 could easily be regarded as something of a turning point in this book's short history. The series has been given the substance it needed and I'm very much looking forward to next month's conclusion of the current storyline.

Olav Beemer
Brugakker 36-06
3704 LP Zeist
The Netherlands

We were concerned Zero would be thought a bit too oblique for too long, Olav. While some people felt we gave away too much in #3, we wanted the readers to feel something for Mike, even if he's having the toughest of times feeling *anything*. And hey, if this column featured a good review from *the* Olav Beemer, and a reference to the "now-classic bear scene from *Shadowman* #1," I guess we're doing *something* right! Sorry to all the letter writers above for some editorial condensing—we simply *had* to run them all, so we cut a bit. For those of you who would like to send us e-mail messages, zap them to me at gsanderson@aklm.com, or to Madeleine at mrobins@aklm.com.

—Gregg

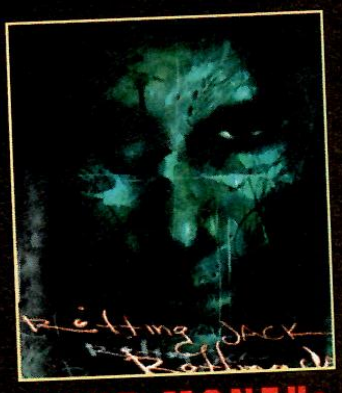
DEBUTING NEXT MONTH:

TUROK & TIMEWALKER: SEVENTH SABBATH #1 OF 2

A monster is on the loose and has made the Eternal Warrior Gilad its latest victim. Gilad's brother, Ivar the Timewalker, must avenge him, but he needs the help of Turok to do so. Failure will signal the end of the century. Our century that is, because the time is 1887!

An exciting one hundred-year journey through the underside of the Valiant Heroes universe, "Seventh Sabbath" is a story of time, treachery, and possible grim futures. Three Turoks and one Timewalker combine to stop a menace older than mankind itself!

By Nicieza, Gulacy & Yoakum.



NEXT MONTH:

It's Jaunty's turn to tell Zero who he is and what's been going on, and it doesn't jibe with Josey's story. Who can Zero believe? It's getting so he can't even believe his own memories. And if Zero's just a normal guy with a messed head, why is some undead guy in a junk car coming for him? All this, and Zero gets lucky! Now, I didn't say it was good luck, did I...?

Delano and Adlard take us half-way there with "Nothing Is True" Part II.

Send your letters to: SHADOWMAN, c/o ACCLAIM COMICS 275 7th Ave New York, NY 10001.
Internet: gsanderson@aklm.com or mrobins@aklm.com
Addresses will be withheld upon request. Letters may be shortened to suit space limitations—sorry!

GROUND ZERO

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Here's a cautionary tale: In our constant quest to make the presence of voudoun in *Shadowman* just slightly more realistic than, say, the stuff in *Live and Let Die*, we do research. And the other evening I turned to my favorite research facility, the internet, and did a search for "voodoo" which resulted in roughly a gazillion listings. I started trawling through them (with two kids and a full time job, I clearly have too much time on my hands). Aside from the usual media-related stuff I found a number of fascinating websites. So I enter one and click for further information.

And hit data hell. My computer hangs. I get ripples up and down the side of the screen. My hard drive makes whirring sounds without accessing anything. And I run like hell (translation: shut down the computer). Maybe things would have been different if I'd sacrificed a chicken first?

—Mad

For some bizarre reason cloaked to us (mass amnesia? a big letter-hack bash leaving the participants zonked for weeks?), our mailbag was remarkably *light* this month (*sniff*). Maybe you guys got a little slack and are late on commenting on #4. We try to run letters on the issue two issues prior to when the letters are printed. It's all fresher in all our minds that way, and the longer you wait to comment on a comic, the less likely you are to actually scribe and send it (we have teams of interns scouring the nation hunting down human trait tidbits like that). So, before you sit down to tell us what you thought of "Nothing Is True" Part II, here you go with a bit of #3, some advance word on #5, and even one letter on #4. If we get a good sampling of comments on this issue, I *might* even tell you all why they call me Fluffy (which you can stow in your threat or promise column as suits you)...

Hey there,

Sonavabitch. Look, I'm sorry, all right? This letter is about the fifth issue of *Shadowman*—yes I know that it is probably too late, and by snail-mail as well, but it's coming up to Christmas and I forgot to e-mail you from my university (where my e-mail account is) before the holidays. So if this is too late then I remain resolutely unrepentant, if you're going to send me stuff at this time of year and expect a speedy reply you are going to have to guess again. Anyway, better late than never (I hope). I'm afraid that I don't actually collect the strip since you can't get it over here (that I've seen anyway). Consequently, the little round-up of what's being happening so far was terribly handy. Also nice to find out a little about Zero's Mysterious Past. But remember—you've gotta be **mean** about telling the readers that kind of thing. Keeps 'em buying the comix just to find out who the hell he is. I know—I've been on the receiving end of this kind of effort. The art is good. Probably the most interesting thing is the way he keeps on flickering between reality and a madness which seems equally real to him, and probably to us as well, eventually.

Nelsius Bresnan
Limerick, Ireland

They don't carry the book? They don't carry *Shadowman* where you are?! You are *asking* your favorite retailer to order you (and your fellow voodoo-fiction fans) your share, right? Thought so.

Dear Gregg Sanderson,

I just finished reading the preview of *Shadowman* #5. Let me tell you all my initial fears and doubts of Jamie Delano replacing Garth Ennis have been cast aside. Charles Adlard's art works, too. Actually, I found this issue to be better than the first two!

I really enjoyed how you incorporated Jack Boniface into the storyline. Having Zero (Mike) fight him was obviously a representation of Zero becoming the new Shadowman. Even if it was just symbolization, it was great. Possibly it was really Jack and not some other manifestation made by Nettie or Zero's mind; I guess I will have to wait.

I cannot wait to learn more about Zero's past. I think he is more than suitable to replace Jack. I also found in issue two that the mask is brought back, branded on his chest. This is interesting, seeing how in issue five Zero's chest is scarred. Leaves me wondering what is going on and what is happening? I like that!

I am happy to say *Shadowman* has, once again, become one of my monthly purchases. This comic surpassed all my expectations.

Matthew McGloin
Lancaster, New York

And now follows a (really) brief comment on #4 and a little lengthier one on #5, both from "Regal" Rob Haney:

Attention!
Re: Shadow Man #4
SHADOWMAN RULES!!!
Your pal and biggest fan,

Rob Haney
Machesney Park, IL

Dear Shadowy Friends,

I just received my preview copy of *Shadowman* #5. Thank you very much for mailing it to me. I was particularly excited that it was this issue because I am looking forward to seeing what Jamie can do with *Shadowman*.

A few years ago I began buying *Animal Man* starting with issue #51, Jamie's first issue. I was hooked. Jamie is a brilliant writer and I am glad to see him join the Acclaim/Valiant comics team. *Shadowman* #5 showed Jamie's improvement since he left *Animal Man*. The style he writes with now is much darker, if you can believe that! Issue 5 was ultimately enjoyable. I must say, I didn't entirely understand what was going on since I haven't read issues 2 though 4, but it was very interesting and exciting. Although I really loved Charlie Adlard's art on *X-Files* and thought that his artwork on issue 5 was great, I cannot wait for Ashley Wood to return. Ashley does a great job of drawing a spooky, dim, and redefined Shadowman.

Thanks for taking your time to read this letter and for sending me the free copy. I am going to loan it to a friend, so maybe you'll hear from him, too. See ya!

Your Pal O' The Shadows,

Rob Haney

We love Ashley, too, Rob. In fact, we've got him working on something very top-secret right now. More details as we are cleared to tout them. In the meantime, keep enjoying his *Shadowman* covers every month! Now, ALL of you, go ruminate over this issue, and get to droppin' us a line!

—Gregg

DEBUTING NEXT MONTH:

ETERNAL WARRIORS: DIGITAL ALCHEMY (64-page Quarterly)
The Eternal Warriors return when a hundred-ton statue of solid gold is dropped on the Tower of London! Blackworks, a crazed alchemist, and Colin King all enter the fray! Can the Forever Family prevent world financial ruin, and save Aram from his one true love?
By Art Holcomb, Dale Eaglesham, and John Floyd.

DR. TOMORROW #1 (OF 12)
When Bart Simms, a rich man's son living in World War II-era U.S.A., finds a fully loaded Angel Computer from 1997, Tomorrow's the limit! Spinning out of Waid/Augustyn and Doug Braithwaite's *Operation: Stormbreaker* April event, this saga spans sixty years of Dr. Tomorrow's life, and bumps into countless landmarks in the Valiant Universe's history. Bob Layton writes and inks this series, chronicling one man's struggle to retain his ideals in a world of growing darkness and cynicism, while each issue pays homage to comic book greats and eras from the forties until today!
Written & Inked by Bob Layton, and penciled by Don Perlin. Swingin' cover by Mike Mignola!

NEXT MONTH:

Zero has a near-*life* experience as more of his past reveals itself. It's definitely *not* the stuff dreams are made of... And it seems Nettie wasn't the *only* one to pay Zero a visit in the hospital. Armed with new information, Zero decides to take a much more *active* role in his life's road. But is he up to the task of wrestling through a voodoo maze of deceit and illusion? Or does the duppie hit the fan? And remember, as Jack puts Zero to bed, this comic is called *Shadowman*, not Zero...

Cover Painting by **ASHLEY WOOD**
Cover layout, logo, and letters page design by **COMICRAFT**

GROUND

Yesterday I was asked by the mother of one of my kid's friends, "just what is a Mature Readers comic book?"

The flip answer is that it's a book in which we can say "fuck." But if that were all it was, I'd trade in my color proofs for a shovel and go off and do honest work; vulgarity for vulgarity's sake is boring. For my money a Mature Readers book is one that tackles characters for whom there are no simple answers. But the lines do blur between mature and Mature, and sometimes the label simply does mean that we can be a little more graphic, a little more vulgar, in showing our characters making their not-very-easy choices. Like the offer Nettie makes Zero this issue, which you *know* has Hell's own pricetag.

I'm okay with my seven-year-old reading *Troublemakers* or *Barbie* or *Impulse*, but I don't want her reading *Shadowman* right now. Someday Mama will take the Mature Readers books down from the high shelf and offer them to her. In about ten years, when she's ready to duck out of the sunlight and look into the shadows....

—Mad

Dear Madeleine and Gregg,

I have read the preview of *Shadowman* #5 that you sent me.

Jamie Delano, who I know from past experience to be an excellent writer of the dark and psychological, did a wonderful job here. I could tell the style of another writer actually quite easily, but this doesn't mean anything negative. Actually, Jamie did as excellent a job as Garth did (does?), but no better (this isn't saying anything negative, because how can you improve on the best?). I did wait to read issue number two before reading the preview, and I found that I really didn't need too much catch-up from it. Most of the events that were alluded to were contained in that book. Actually, issue five looks on its own as if it is a sequel of issue two.

Charles Adlard did a superb job here (actually I think he did a better job than on *X-Files*) and, believe it or not, the colors will not be needed one little bit. Your letter that accompanied the preview indicated that Charlie would only be on for four issues, and this is unfortunate. Not to knock Ashley, it's just that Ashley reflects Garth's style down to a 'T,' and Charlie reflects Jamie's. I have a suggestion, though. Why not rotate? Have Ashley do four issues, then Charlie do four. Or, have a new artist every four issues. This would increase the visual appeal of the book, and give us a chance to view others on Zero. If you need a suggestion for a future artist, I would suggest that you get John McCrea from *Hitman*. He would be perfect (come to think of it, I wouldn't mind Ashley or Charlie on *Hitman*).

The dialogue in the book lives up to the region it is from. The dialects are on par, and the proper amount of cursing is mixed in to reflect this, without any being gratuitous. It is hard to believe that both Garth and Jamie are from a country in the British Isles (Garth is Irish, after all).

The plot is a good one, and begins to call into question if Zero imagined the events in issue two, or if it was a whole hallucination. I mean, we are left clueless as to what will happen, and the less we know, the better it is.

I must say I laughed out loud with the humor, such as on page six, the "snake in the hat" remark. The humor is always welcome.

I will say, I am pleased with the direction of the book so far, and I believe I will be happy with it as a whole. You people, and the Acclaim Company as a whole, are off in the right direction. I am honored by your request for my commentary, and I welcome anything else that you wish to send for my critique.

Thank you.

Adam Holmberg
207 E. Minnesota
Spring Valley, IL 61362

We're happy to report that Charlie Adlard is the man on this book for the foreseeable future, Adam. As for our plans for the incomparable Ashley Wood, read on...

Dear Madeleine and Gregg,

I just picked up *Shadowman* #5 and I wanted to tell you that I really enjoyed it! After you sent me the preview I loved it, but was confused by stuff that I didn't know about, having only read the first two issues at the time. It was incredible and I am looking forward to a long run of Jamie's stories.

I really enjoyed Charlie Adlard's artwork in color! It looked so much better after Atomic Paintrbrush worked their wonders on it. Charlie's artwork is much clearer and easier to follow in color. I can't wait to see more of his *Shadowman* work.

I have a question before I depart, so I'll get on with it and spare you my psychotic rambling!

When will Ashley Wood be returning?

Thanks for reading my letter and please continue to keep up the awesome work! I'll be writing back next issue to tell you how kick-ass it was, so I'll see you later, friends.

Your pal and biggest fan/supporter,

Rob Haney
1045 Knightsbridge Dr.
Machesney Park, IL 61115

O.K., you never heard this, and I wasn't the one who spilled the beans, but here goes (and don't make me come after you for leaking it...): we currently have Ashley working on a very special mini-series which is a spin-off of *Shadowman*. The title of the series is *Deadside*. And if that isn't teaser enough, we will be utilizing *all* of Mr. Wood's considerable artistic talents. Go check out an Ashley Wood *Shadowman* cover (pretty easy to find, he's done them all) and you'll know *exactly* what I mean.

Dear Gregg Sanderson,

Thank you for the advance preview of *Shadowman* #5. I have long admired the way Jamie Delano strings words together and his ablility in using alliteration to evoke deliciously horrible images. Delano's use of narration to shock and draw the reader in is a noticeable departure from the in-your-face ultra-violence that Garth Ennis assaulted the reader with in the preceding issues.

Unfortunately, in this issue I found there was too much dialogue between Zero/Mike and Josey. The protagonist's retelling of his nightmarish, black magic life lacked immediacy for me.

The fight scene with the old Shadowman seemed contrived, although I did enjoy the bone head snake's colorful commentary. I left the story feeling unsatsfied because the telling of these bizarre events lacked character development. Thanks again for the opportunity to give my two cents worth.

M. Gaetz
208, 2416-14A St. S.W.
Calgary, Alberta
T2T 3X3 CANADA

Gregg & Madeleine,

Another advance copy from you folks. And even after what I said about *Magnus*. Thank you, I am rather flattered. So, I'll flatter you right back.

Shadowman #5 was a good read. Bit hard trying to figure out what had happened in the two previous issues (which weren't out when I received your preview) but perhaps Ennis wrapped up his storyline and I was looking for references that weren't there. *Shadowman* is not a straightforwardly presented comic, judging from #1-2 and #5. It's not clear what's going on all the time, but I'm sure there is a lot of plot substance yet to be

Cover Painting by **ASHLEY WOOD**
Cover layout, logo, and letters page design by **COMICRAFT**

ZERO

revealed, there is much to be said for a comic which oozes this degree of style. Jamie Delano is a writer I greatly respect and admire, and his initial take on Shadowman did not disappoint. Although his writing methods are very different to that of his predecessor, it is to his credit that he achieves the same high level of quality.

As far as the art goes, Charles Adlard is not a favourite of mine. I've found his *X-Files* work, especially his featureless and anatomically questionable presentation of characters, to be uneven and dull. However, this was not bad at all. Teach me to pigeon-hole people, eh? Still, I do hope Ashley Wood's run did not terminate with #4. That guy is the right artist for this comic (great, great cover to *Shadowman* #2, by the way).

Smooth transition, good stuff. Only negative comment would be that we still don't really know what kind of person Zero is. This isn't a part of that "mystery" element I was talking about, this is what I see as a weakness in the main character. I like him, but he's gone from being mysteriously unfathomable to being just a bit fuzzy around the edges. As soon as Delano sorts this out, everything will be chocolate.

Stick a pin through the kewpie doll's heart for me, I'll be back for *Shadowman* #6.

Toby Ingram
53, Brook St.
Colchester
CO1 2UT England, UK

I hope by the time you read this issue, you've got a better feel for who Mike/Zero is, Toby (we now know for sure he likes girls and vodka—is there really much more to guys?). This story arc is a lot about Zero struggling to get a hold on his new "life." In many ways, this comic chronicles Zero's second chance to get it right after a guilt-ridden, duplicitous quarter-century or so the first time. Even the second go-around doesn't seem a walk in the park, does it? As for the kewpie doll, I'll probably take out my Monday grouchiness on it on your behalf.

Dear Gregg:

G'day! First of all, let me tell you what a lovely Christmas present receiving this was. Thank you for the copy, and as you requested a snappy return, I read it as soon as I opened it up, and then wrote this letter. I found this issue much more enjoyable than the first when I wrote in, so thanks for thinking of me.

I actually know who Zero is now! He has an identity and a history which helps us all a great deal.

Jamie shone as he invariably does, I have followed his work for quite some time now, my favorite works of his being his *Hellblazer* run and his stint on *Animal Man*. I actually got the opportunity to meet Jamie in Melbourne this year for Ozcon '96 and he is a very pleasant fellow indeed. He paced the story very well and I found myself racing through the pages to see what he had to say next. Who knows? If he keeps this level of story and pacing up, I will most definitely be here for the long haul.

Charlie Adlard, you owe me big-time, pal. I had the good fortune to meet Charles about a month ago in Melbourne again and he told me to write to DC and tell them how much I enjoyed his work! Well I've done that and now here I am telling Acclaim that you've done a great job again! I think the beers are on you, son! I look forward to purchasing this issue and seeing whether or not the colors do your pencils the justice they so well deserve. What is the deal with the Irish dwarf? It appears that he either knows a great deal about Mike, or at least he is a doing a damn convincing act. The scene on page 19 of Mike head-butting the zombie made my stomach turn, so well done. The panel layout was much better with this issue than what we got with #1 and is appreciated. I look forward to seeing how Ashley's work looks after his break, 'til then, keep Charlie on for as long as you want.

There appears and is, for that matter, a lot more going on than meets the eye and I am now looking forward to seeing how this story develops. Gregg, once again many thanks for this preview of a wonderful story, the only thing that annoys me is that I'm going to have to wait another four months to see how it continues. 'Til then, though, I am content to wait. Please feel free to send anything that you want commented on in the future and I will endeavour to get back to you as quickly as I have with this.

Regards,

Tory Favro
43 Monique Drive
Langwarrin, Victoria
3910 Australia

Beers for fan support? Charlie! Boy, just when you thought freelancers couldn't sink any further... (Then again, I could hold a batch of art boards and Charlie's check for a tidy ale ransom. Hmm.)

Dear Gregg,

Many thanks for the sneak peek at *Shadowman* #5. I didn't think it would be possible to replace Garth without sacrificing the quality of the book. I was wrong. Jamie and Charlie did a great job and I'm looking forward to see what they have in store for us over the next few issues.

I really like the "mystery" aspect of Mike a.k.a. Zero a.k.a. Shadowman. Just who the hell is he? I hope we get some answers soon (not all of them, just a few).

As usual, the art was terrific. It really captured the feel of the story. Everyone involved did a dynamite job. I can't wait to see the finished version when it comes out.

It looks as if *Shadowman* is developing quite the niche. Keep up the fine work. You definitely have a winner on your hands.

Jeffrey Thompson
11 Bennington Way
Belle Mead, NJ 08502

Garth is indeed irreplaceable (and irrepressible for that matter, at least prosewise). Jamie brings a nearly completely different sensibility to this book, but one that, coupled with the skillful way he plies his trade, we think will keep this dirty little corner of ours a well-travelled one for a long time.

—Gregg

ALSO ON SALE NOW:

TUROK/TIMEWALKER #2
SEVENTH SABBATH

Twice in the past, the Timewalker and a Turok will try to stop the monster called Sabbath. And they will fail. But those battles have prepared Joshua Fireseed and Ivar for what needs to be done now. In order to defeat a butcher of Biblical proportions, will Josh and Ivar set in motion events that will unleash an even greater evil on the Valiant Heroes Universe? And who is the mystery named Darque?

By Fabian Nicieza, Paul Gulacy, and Charles Yoakum.

NEXT MONTH:

You know things are bad when you're counting on *Nettie* to get you out of hell (or the closest thing to it)! Determined to fight back against the lies, deals, and machinations that have dragged him from here to eternity and back, Zero will need all the help he can get. Claudine may be willing, but is she prepared to go the distance with Zero? The white-hot conclusion to "Nothing Is True," by Delano and Adlard, will be here in one month. We expect to see you there.

Send your letters to:

S H A D O W M A N
c/o ACCLAIM COMICS
275 7th Ave New York, NY 10001
gsanderson@aklm.com

Please include your name and address, and the name and city of your comic shop. Addresses will be withheld upon request.

GROUND

So we bring a bit of closure to Mike's search for the truth; though, as Jamie Delano points out, in voodoo *nothing* is true, and *everything* is possible. We've kept the focus pretty tight so far, looking at Zero's past every which way. Now we're going to open up the focus a little and learn more about the voodoun community in gracious New Orleans, courtesy of Messrs. Delano and Adlard (and haven't they done a splendid job on this arc?). So stick around: where else you gonna find a Walker Between the Worlds with a Mambo for a boss and a girlfriend who's a cat?

Dear Fluffy,

You asked for letters, and you got one. Issue #6 was a good read. Mike (Zero) is still pretty uncertain about his past, and seeing his own tombstone might complicate things even more so. The chicken-chasing ritual that Zero had to perform was odd, but what I want to know is how did he get the chicken to drink three of his body-fluids... Just don't tell me what they were! The art is good and it fits in just right with the dark, moody setting. I was pissed that Garth Ennis left the book, but Jamie Delano has been a pleasant surprise. Keep them coming.

Hector Ocegueda
1340 W. Wolfram
Chicago, IL 60657

P.S. Will Master Darque be popping up soon?

Would you believe Mike force-fed the chicken his blood, sweat, and tears? Yeah, me either. And you can check out the current incarnation of Master Darque (Shadowman's arch-nemesis from volume 1) in the two-issue miniseries *Seventh Sabbath*, starring Turok and Timewalker, and on sale *now*. How's that for service?

Dear Fellow Shadowmen,

I'm not one to write to comic book companies, but when I read in *Shadowman* #6 that you said the mail bag was light, I felt the need to write you a letter of appreciation and encouragement.

I am a reader and collector of every title of every issue of VH1 and I was very skeptical about the revamp. Needless to say I am very satisfied with what has been done with all the titles so far and I really am intrigued by the subtle (so far) connection to the old Valiant Universe.

Anyway, this letter is supposed to give feedback about *Shadowman*. I didn't like Zero at first because he wasn't Jack Boniface, but now I try to think of the title without Zero and I know I would miss him. The connection with Jack is very intriguing so far and I know that if you put the same amount of thought into the connection as you have with the other VH2 titles we are all going to be surprised and satisfied with the explanation. That to me seems to be the key to what makes the Valiant Universe work: **Continuity**. I am collecting all of the VH2 titles with as much excitement as the old VH1, and to me that says a lot. There are no other books that I look forward to getting each week as I do my Acclaims. And believe me, over the years I've tried them all.

As I said early on, I want to encourage you to keep up the great work everyone at Acclaim has been turning out so far. And even if I don't write again, I'm here reading, watching, waiting, and most of all, enjoying.

Thank you,

James N. Lowe
441 Colonial Drive
East Greenville, PA 18041

While we love knowing you're out there *somewhere* enjoying the fruits of our collective labors, James, would it *kill* you to drop us a line once in while? We get lonely here. (Sorry, I'm on some wacko allergy medication that spins my behavior into Jewish mother mode.)

Because you asked:

The new *Shadowman* shows promise. Picking Garth Ennis to launch it was a no-brainer, as there isn't anyone writing mass appeal horror comics today that can do believable characterization & grab-your-attention dialogue quicker than Garth. Jamie Delano's follow-up shows me you're serious about making this title as much (if not more so) horror as superhero. Jamie's run on *Hellblazer* proved he's a master not only of plotting, but of plot twists. Some of his stuff easily ranks among the most memorable works of Rod Serling and Alfred Hitchcock. Who do you have lined up for third and fourth story arcs?

The lettering & coloring have earned all the superlative comments I'm sure you're getting on them, so I'll move on to what I don't particularly care for:

First, the pace is a little slow. After around forty years of reading comics, I've developed a preference for more action and less back story, particularly in the first few issues of a title. It's not that you're doing anything really wrong with *Shadowman*, it's just that I wish you were moving the story a little faster.

Second, I don't like Charlie Adlard's pencils here. What he does worked on *X-Files*, because we all know what David Duchovny and Gillian Anderson look like, and in a title like that, revealing too much would have ruined the mood established by the show. But in *Shadowman*, this stuff is just so plain weird, I need all the detail I can get to help me figure out what the heck is going on! So Charlie, sharpen those pencils a little more, OK?

I think *Shadowman* is the best monthly you've put out since the revamp (in fact, it's the only one I've added to my "must buy" list). So as long as you keep the top-notch writing, I'll keep buying.

Gary Glover
fujimo44@aol.com

Gary, you (and any others who are eager to get past the "Who am I, really?" riff) should be happy to see that next issue has *nothing* to do with identity crises or layers of the reality onion.

Dear Gregg and Madeleine,

Thanks for the *Shadowman* #5 preview. Firstly: Why not do *Shadowman* in black and white? This certainly isn't your four-colour hero stuff and black and white would help set it apart and maybe even reach more indie readers.

Specifics: art—perfect for the story. My favourite Adlard work (although I'm not a fan). Good, clear storytelling, realistic facial expressions (e.g. page 9, panels 1 and 2) and interesting

Cover Painting by **ASHLEY WOOD**
Cover layout, logo, and letters page design by **COMICRAFT**

ZERO

layouts all pull the reader along at a rapid clip. Nice backgrounds, too—the lack of background on page 5, panel 5 increases its impact—intense!

Story: almost perfect. I don't like the pseudo-Moore captions 2 and 5 on page 3, although the slower pace makes page 4's splash panel all the more striking. The lengthy captions on page 11 are more excusable, especially the hints of a depth to Zero/Mike's character in panels 2 and 3. That's all the bad stuff. On the other hand the script (dialogue) feels spot on, and the plot, although having reverence for what went before (volume #1 and Ennis) is already developing a distinctive Delano twist. Less "fucks" in the script, too. Not that I have anything against the word—unless it's used by every character in every speech.

Atomic Paintbrush? Pretty pictures. Pretty colours. *Shadowman* isn't pretty. We're all grown-ups now, if we can't follow the story from the creators and/or if the artist's work isn't clear—sack them! (This artist's work is clear—so don't!)

Lettering: typical Comicraft job. Nice. Not too many effects, either.

So, there you have it. *Shadowman* #1 was very good and #5 improves (slightly) on that. If the creators can improve and the book continues to take the same direction (Zero not knowing everything straight away, theme of what is real, strong characterization of a small cast grounded in realism), then it DESERVES to be a hit. But with today's market, who knows? Acclaim is doing its bit by putting out a variety of different styles. I'm doing my bit by buying everything I like (all the titles so far) and telling my friends/retailer. *Shadowman* may never sell *X-Men* numbers, but I hope to see it continue—I loved the old series and this is as good, if not better than that ever was.

Take care and good luck,

Paul Hayward
20 Edrich Ave.
Oldbrook, Milton Keynes
England MK6 2QR

Dear Voodoo people,

Shadowman #6 was the damn coolest issue yet! Jamie Delano, Charlie Adlard, Ashley Wood, and the rest of you guys did a great job and deserve a huge pat on the back. Go tell Fabian that I said to give you a raise!

Every time I read an issue of *Shadowman* I have to sit back and scream when I finish it! That is how much I like this book. I am trying to force my brother Joe to read *Shadowman*, but he hasn't given in to my torture yet. Don't worry. He will soon bow down to Acclaim!

I am happy with the recent plot of *Shadowman*! I hope it keeps going in this brutally dark direction. I'll write back with more next time, but until then keep up the great work! I'll see ya in thirty.

Your pal and biggest fan,

Rob Haney

I showed your letter to Fabian, and he said it was funny, *really* funny. He also said to stop torturing your brother; we'd just rather not be implicated in that sort of thing.

Dear Madeleine,

I was dissapointed when I learned that Garth Ennis would not be sticking around for the writing duties on the new and improved *Shadowman*. However, having read issues 5 and 6 I can still say I am thoroughly enjoying the title. Keep up the good work.

I have one note on issue 6. It's just a technicality really. I was under the impression that bodies were not buried in New Orleans due to the city being below sea level. At least that's what the tour guide told me when I visited the old cemetary near the Garden District.

I have a suggestion for the title of your letter column as well if you ever decide to change it—Absolute Zero. It's a scientific term which means the total absence of heat. It sort of makes for a nice play on words, given Zero's state of being.

Jason Luellen
Nashville, TN

Oops! You are correct, sir. In New Orleans, people are either cremated, or encrypted, as the city is only a couple of feet above sea level. We vow to get it right next time we have a grave scene (like *that* could happen in a book like this).

On a personal note, this will be my last *Ground Zero*. I am moving across the office to our *Acclaim Young Readers* line, and up the ladder, to Associate Editor status, hauling in all the fame and fortune that lofty title affords (doesn't take long to do, and your back doesn't even get sore!). So I basically trade Shadowman for Snow White. And they said I had no range! I'll miss Mike, Nettie, and all the voodoo nastiness this place offers (I'll miss *Magnus* too, of course, but I'll save my can-kickin' sign-off for that title's letters page). I'll miss your letters every month telling us exactly how close we've come to hitting the mark. I *already* miss seeing exactly how close to the fist-swinging point I can push Lynaire and Omar from our side of the cubicle wall. I will *certainly* miss working with Madeleine, learning from her, and watching her chuckle at some weirdness I've expressed. (Madeleine, even now pointing me in the right direction, tells me it's time to shut my pie slot and wave bye-bye, so bye-bye for now!) But most of all, I'll miss having a damned window!

—Gregg "Fluffy" Sanderson

Wondering why they call a move to the bowels of the office a "step up."

ALSO ON SALE NOW:

TUROK: RED PATH
A 44-page Quarterly

A killer is on the loose in Oklahoma City — and Joshua Fireseed recognizes the method to the monster's madness. Could the killer be using one of Turok's own weapons? Could the butcher known as Redpath be Josh's roommate, Barry?

By Nicieza, Kayanan, and Ramos.

NEXT MONTH:

The stench of voodoo is hangin' heavy over New Orleans, and the stink goes way up to the city's highest and mightiest. The cops think Zero's in the thick of it, but when New Orleans's deadest hitman cuts a deal with the Law, you know *it's* hitting the fan.

The Buzz, Part I
by Delano and Adlard.

Send your letters to:

SHADOWMAN
c/o ACCLAIM COMICS
275 7th Ave New York, NY 10001
gsanderson@aklm.com

Please include your name and address, and the name and city of your comic shop. Addresses will be withheld upon request.

GROUND ZERO

SEND YOUR LETTERS TO: **SHADOWMAN, C/O ACCLAIM COMICS 275 7TH AVE, NEW YORK, NY 10001**
VDORAZIO@AKLM.COM • Please include your name and address, and the name and city of your comic shop. Addresses will be withheld upon request.

FIRST THINGS FIRST: last issue Gregg Sanderson made his goodbyes to the Big Easy and all that voudoun jazz. So this issue marks Valerie D'Orazio's debut in the *Shadowman* Assistant Chair (imagine black leather straps with huge buckles, lots of extremely high-tech read-outs, diodes, and of course 100,000 volts flowing through it at all times). Val comes from Acclaim's Young Reader division, but I have a feeling she's been hankering to walk on the darker side of the Acclaim Universe for a while. So welcome Valerie; and y'all play nice with her (but not too nice), y'hear?

One of Val's first assignments is to tell you about a little crystal-ball-gazing device called the Valiant Voyeur that you can get your own hands wrapped around. You're going to want one. Or more. Over to you, Val...

— Mad

VALIANT VOYEURS: Voyeur is French for "Person who is looking at something that he or she shouldn't be looking at." Valiant means "Really brave and wonderful person" (the root word being "Val," which means "super-powerful goddess").

So a Valiant Voyeur is for really brave people who, taking a peek at the innards of the item in question, will be looking at things they are not supposed to. And what would that be, you might ask? Provacative images of our beloved heroes, revealing never-before-revealed plot-twists, in full color. Shocking scenes of pathos, carnage, and FUN FUN FUN!!!! All this (and more) contained in a little black plastic viewer...and they're free! Free, that is...to the deserving!

And how do you deserve a Valiant Voyeur?

Show us how much you love *Shadowman!*

Send us artwork, letters, dioramas, letters, poetry, letters, *Shadowman* song lyrics, letters (I need letters, dammit!), customized action figures...and if they're really really cool, we'll send you a Valiant Voyeur featuring the undead-cutie himself! But supplies are limited...so ACT NOW!!!!!

I heard that the other editorial teams might be offering Valiant Voyeurs featuring their own Valiant heroes...this could be your golden opportunity! Because if you get enough Valiant Voyeurs, you could play the Great Valiant Voyeur Game!

(I made this game up myself.)

For this game you will need several different Valiant Voyeurs - - you might want to hook up with fans of our other titles (or be really adventurous, expand your horizons, and get hooked on another book, such as *Quantum and Woody* or *Eternal Warriors*) in order to get these Voyeurs.

Now - - this is not only a great game but a test of your latent psychic ability, as well. Grab one Voyeur, without looking at its contents. Close your eyes and concentrate - - which of the Valiant heroes will this one contain? The Terrific Teenaged Troublemakers? The Marvelous Magnus? Nimble-footed Ninjak? Huh? Who? Pick one! Then...look! Were you right? If so, you might really be psychic, though to be sure, you should do it about 150 more times and make stats.

Time for some letters...

Dear Shadowman Crew,

My name is Jim Cullen. I am 23 years old and have been reading comics since I was nine *(Iron Man* 169). I first bought your title during the first run. I visited the city of Las Vegas and talked to the owner of a local comics shop and I asked him what was his top selling Valiant comic (you see, I went in there in January and hoped to buy your *Quantum Leap* series). He told me that without a doubt it was *Shadowman*. *Shadowman*, I thought? I thought the original series was great, but I had no idea it could be so popular. I then discovered that this was not the original series. When I finally got hold of issue one I was blown away. I had never read anything by Mr. Ennis and I thought it was great. When I learned that the creative team was changing with issue five I thought it was going to go downhill, but oh was I wrong. Having just read issue six I must say that I love the plot a lot. I feel that Delano has a great skill at telling stories and the art is great too (I love the style). In closing, let me just ask you to please keep up the good work. You guys have made *Shadowman* my favorite comic besides *Man of the Atom*.

Thank you.

Your friend
Jim Cullen Jr.
8 Davida Road
Burlington Mass.
01803-1712

Cover art by ASHLEY WOOD. Cover layout, logo and letters page design by COMICRAFT

THE AWESOME ACCLAIM CHECKLIST:

MAGNUS #7: Magnus confronts the ultimate and opens Pandora's Box! The result may be the end of the future as we know it, which may mean the end of Magnus!
By Peyer, Boller, and Pepoy

NINJAK #9: Denny's always been the best player at the Ninjak video game. Now he's been sucked into his Angel Computer's CPU! If he doesn't play to win, he's gonna die!
By Busiek, Washington III, Vokes, and Avon-Oeming

P.S. Tell Mr. Delano he has a great sense of humor. (Has he ever done stand-up?)

Thank you for the kind words, Jim. Mr. Delano is indeed the Jim Carrey of comicbook writing (in his sort of darker, Riddler/Cable Guy incarnation, of course). As for that pesky *Quantum Leap* series - - we haven't got a new release date for it yet, but we do plan to release it, and we'll keep you posted.

Whoa!!!!!!!!!!!!

I'm almost speechless at the events which took place in *Shadowman* #7, but what I can say, I will say now. After putting *Shadowman* #7 aside for almost 2 weeks now from a very hectic end to my last year in high school, I finally got around to reading my pile of comics that seemed to keep growing with nothing ever getting read. Lately, things in *Shadowman* have been getting very confusing with the "Nothing Is True" story arc, but everything pulled together in part 3. I had no idea what I would be getting into when I started this book. It turned out I was reading the origin of Michael and how he came to be in the position he is in now. And then the stunner came - -Josey was the one who double-crossed Zero. I was starting to like this guy, thinking he was a real good friend to Zero, when you guys decided to shake things up a little. It all comes together clearly now in one of the best books put out by Acclaim so far. Good job, guys. I can't wait for the conclusion next month.

Thank You,

Mark Ellingson
abbeyrd@asu.uswest.net@inet

THIS IS IT! YOUR

VALIANT VALUE STAMP

FOR THIS ISSUE! CLIP 'EM AND COLLECT 'EM!

Yep, that Josey is a tricky lil' devil, ain't he? But he's not really bad...he's just drawn that way. Honest.

Now, since it seems I have a bit more space to fill, let me expound on a subject that has suddenly become very close to my heart...LETTERS!!!

Yes, letters...

In this letter column (and, let us not forget, the *Magnus* letter column), a forum is provided for you the reader to express your opinions on the comic you have just read. If your letter is picked for publication, it will become forever part of the Valiant mythos, preserved in ink for generations to come! This is your chance to voice your feelings about Michael LeRoi, Nettie, and the whole *Shadowman* gang! So drop us a line, won't you?

In order to facilitate the letter-writing process, I will use my expertise gained in the Classics Illustrated books (which I also assistant-edit) to create some Study Questions for y'all...

STUDY QUESTIONS FOR *SHADOWMAN* #9:

1. Did Mr. Corbyn really deserve what happened to him on that terrible rainy night? Why or why not? Write a poem to express your feelings on this issue.

2. When Defilo says, "Cats, huh? Can't live with them..." what does she really mean? When Mike retorts with "Cops, huh? can't live with them..." is he making a play for her? I sure hope so! That would be cool!

3. What DOES the "P" stand for?! (Pocono?)

4. If you made a stage production based on this issue, who would play Claude? How did you come to this decision? Who would play Mignon? Who would play Yarboro? Why? Write a poem to express your happiness at just being alive in this time and place, with the freedom to spend all this time writing a letter to *Shadowman* and quite possibly getting a Voyeur in the process.

5. Isn't David Duchovny cute? (Val, stop fantasizing on company time —Mad)

I hope you found these questions to be helpful, but don't depend on them alone...think of your own questions. Share with the group. And become part of the legend...

—Valerie D'Orazio

NEXT MONTH: A line of sad and sorry punks are just waiting for their shot at "the buzz:" to be a cheval, possessed by a deadly voudoun espirit and kill hapless citizens of New Orleans. There's a Bocor war brewing. Zero and Defilo are right in the line of fire...but these two fire back! "The Buzz," part two, By Delano and Adlard

GROUND

Ashley Wood, who is a) Australian, b) not female, and c) an all-round good fellow, is one of the insufficiently sung heroes of this book. Ashley did the artwork on the horrific-but-beautiful first arc of Shadowman with Garth Ennis, setting up a mood and a place for this series where anything dark and dire is possible. Since issue #1, Ashley has been painting Shadowman's covers, whetting our appetites for the voudoun, dark desires and mayhem within. And he's been endlessly good humored about it, never once saying "You want *eyeballs* in a jar? What kind of deviant *are* you?" Gee, not only talented, but a gentleman, too. Thanks, Ash!

—Mad

Dear Whoever is doing the letters page now Gregg's gone,

Shadowman 8 was a good conclusion to the second arc. It was an issue which had me trying to work out what was going to happen next — always a good sign, since if I know what is going to happen there's no point in reading the comic! Fortunately, from the evidence of the past eight issues that point is still a long way off.

Delano's writing was the best I've seen from him (and coming from someone who loved *Animal Man* that's no small compliment). It somehow had an authentic voodoo 'feel,' the strangeness did not seem forced, as if the author was trying to see how clever he could be (as Vertigo at it's most pretentious seems to do). The main criticism I have about this issue is that the story ended too quickly. Not every story arc has to last 4 issues you know!

Zero's finding Nettie's soul and her defeating Josey in 2 panels on page 22 and Nettie's trick all in the same issue seemed like too many developments in one episode. I think we were all expecting Nettie to pull some kind of stroke — Zero won his freedom far too easily — and I expected Nettie to take over Claudine's body. What I didn't expect was the girl in the cat's body routine. I hope to see some developments in this unhappy menage-a-trois in the coming issues

Next issue is copycat cover month? Just so long as it isn't copycat inside month too. Seriously, the inspiration for next month's cover is both well chosen and interesting. From the 'Next issue' box and the *Previews* copy the next storyline looks interesting — 4 issues again I suppose. Still, a potentially strong variation on the voodoo theme. As a suggestion for future storylines (as if you need them) I would like to see Shadowman feel like the early *Strange Tales* appearances of Doctor Strange — like the issue where he goes inside the guilty man's dreams and confronts Nightmare for the first time. I take it we are going to see some voodoo hierarchy in this title. I always like that in *Thor* (when it was done well) and *Hellstorm* too. It helps to know where the character stands in his own world and also how he is related to it, but again I expect Delano to realize that. What the hell! Just keep doing whatever it is that you're doing and I'll be along for the ride (hopefully with a few friends — I hear that sales aren't too good at the moment — true? Is this title in danger of cancellation?)

Adlard's art still suits the title by the way. If we can't have Ashley Wood then he's made himself the number one choice over the past 4 months (unless Bob Hall came back for an issue — the first annual perhaps? A cover?)

Do do that voodoo that you do so well (I think).

Paul Heyward,
20 Edrich Avenue
Oldbrook. Milton Keynes
MK6 2QR England

Shadowman in danger of cancellation? Paul, my dear boy, it simply isn't true! Thanks for the compliments, and, as for our unhappy menage-a-trois...well, that would be telling! Suffice to say that things aren't gonna be easy for Mike romantically any time soon — where would the fun be, otherwise?

Uh...I'VE GOT THIS CONTEST!!!

It's The Shadowman "Desert Island Discs" Contest, aka "Music to Read Shadowman by" aka "Shadowmusic" — come up with a list of songs that you feel fit the tone of Shadowman, and would make a good "soundtrack" for some late-night voodoo reading. For example:

1) Black Magic Woman" by Santana
2) "Don't Fear The Reaper" by Blue Oyster Cult
3) "Breathe" by Prodigy
4) "Hooked On A Feeling" by Blue Swede

...you get the idea, eh? I'm setting a six-song minimum, eleven-song maximum. And the prize? Uh...prize...prize (she looked feverishly around her office)...a Valiant Voyeur fer shur...and...your winning entry printed in the letter column... There will be a whole bunch of runner-ups, and the Grand Prize Winner will receive a signed copy of Shadowman! Hoohah!

(Um...disclaimer: this isn't a real soundtrack album we're putting out, just a suggested music list. So none of you recording artists get angry at me, or anything...)

Start Writing!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

Cover Painting by ASHLEY WOOD
Cover layout, logo, and letters page design by COMICRAFT

ZERO

And now I would like to just throw out to the powers-that-be some ideas for possible Shadowman spin-offs in the future:

SHADOWMAN SPIN-OFF PITCHES, BY VAL

1. "Li'l Mike": This would be an Acclaim Young Readers book focusing on the characters of Shadowman portrayed as cute, five-year-old kids. Hijinks and hilarity ensue as voodoo comes face-to-face with the foibles of childhood. This book can also have an educational aspect to it, as it can teach kids to avoid roaming espirits — after reading this issue, you can see that such instruction could only be helpful. I see big big licensing opportunities for this one.

2. "And Then There's Claude": The life and times of Claude the Albino. Of course, continuity is key here, and we would have the stories be a prequel to when Ratboy sucked his eyes out. This would be a mini-series, but if you twist my arm a bit, I might consider going full series on this baby. It's your call.

3. "Fashion With Persephone": A book for the elusive girl's market. Answers questions such as: "how does she get her hair to stick to the sides of her head like that?" and, "what do you do when you're in love with a guy who has completely ruined your life but has really nice eyes?" A great way to get women interested in reading comicbooks.

4. "Shadbert": Mike LeRoi tries to go legit and make it in the corporate arena. The Two H's are very evident here: Hijinks and Hilarity. We might even see if the Wall Street Journal or a similar business journal would be interested in picking this puppy up. Then, we could get the suits to try our other titles, the train at rush-hour would be packed with businessmen and women reading *Quantum and Woody* and *Ninjak*, and...it'll be like Japan! I could draw this series, if you want, because I have a spare, almost... *cubist* style that could really work with this. But I insist on you hiring Cuddles Banmally for the inks, or it's a no-go (sorry, but I have my stipulations).

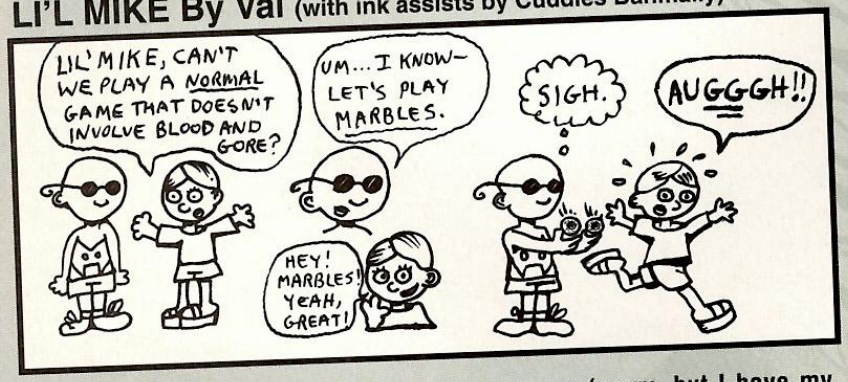
5. "Marlan the Bellhoppe": This would be a highly intellectual limited series that would just focus on Marlan the Bellhop talking about LIFE. The hook would be that there is no action in this book, just the same shot of Marlan sitting at a table statted over and over again. This is our chance to go past the limits of our medium and produce a real work of art, comparable to Kafka or Nietzche. I see an Eisner or Harvey award...

6. "Two Angry Cats": Claudine the black cat and the cat from *Bloodshot* team-up in this whimsical series. The first issue could have them going up against the Goat from *Quantum and Woody* in a bout of mortal combat. I really think I could write this one, though I will be satisfied with just a "created by" tag in the opening credits.

And there you have it. Just a few chestnuts for you to consider, if ever there's an opening. Don't worry, it didn't take me much time to write, just a coupla' ideas I was kicking around...it's not like, uh, it took me ALL WEEKEND to do, or anything like that...just some thoughts... okay...yep...slinking back to obscurity now...alrighty, then...

See U in thirty.

LI'L MIKE By Val (with ink assists by Cuddles Banmally)

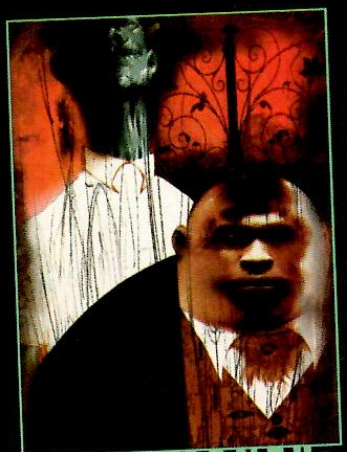

LIL' MIKE, CAN'T WE PLAY A NORMAL GAME THAT DOESN'T INVOLVE BLOOD AND GORE?
UM... I KNOW— LET'S PLAY MARBLES.
SIGH.
AUGGGH!!
HEY! MARBLES! YEAH, GREAT!

ALSO OUT THIS MONTH:

MAGNUS #8

Does too many Magni in the mix spoil the pot? Magnus takes a few pointers from his alternate selves in"Gift of the Magni"

By Peyer, Boller and Pepoy



NEXT MONTH:

Mike and Defilo head for Florida, hoping to catch some much-needed R & R...but voodoo takes no vacation!!!! "Clear Blue Skies" by Delano and Adlard

Send your letters to:

SHADOWMAN
c/o ACCLAIM COMICS
275 7th Ave New York, NY 10001
vdorazio@aklm.com

Please include your name and address, and the name and city of your comic shop. Addresses will be withheld upon request.

GROUND

It's not all deadlines and editorial negotiations in this job, really. Sometimes I get the *Shadowman* lore repeated back to me, with new and different spin on it. And that's what's happening with the stack of videocassettes and design documents that take up the *Shadowman* video-game corner on my desk. Now look: I stopped playing games like this when it became impossible to skew the outcome by tilting the table...but from what I'm seeing on this game, I may have to limber up my trigger finger and start playing again. Val has more on this, but I thought I'd add my voice: the *Shadowman* game is going to be really cool. And you can believe me: I'm an editor.

—Mad

"The End is a-comin', Shadowman. I seen it in Deadside dreams. There's a scourge ridin' free on the soulwinds, movin' in from a place of madness and murder, poisonin' those minds that need to act on their darkest desires..."

— Angenetta "Nettie" Dubois

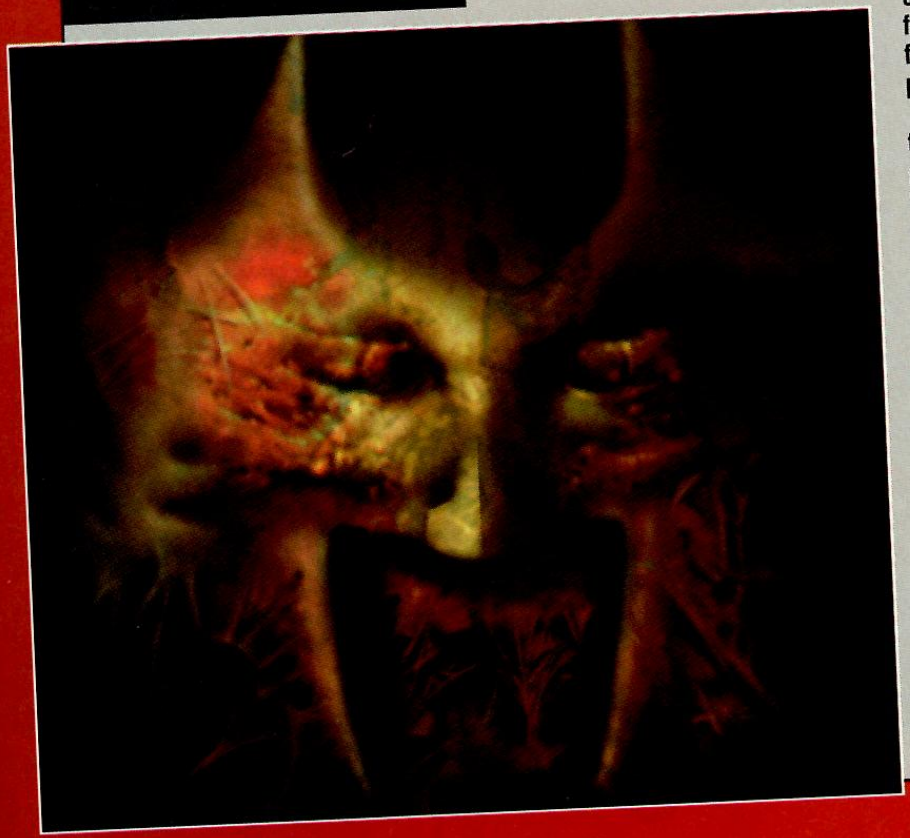
Yup, when Zero hears those words he KNOWS Nettie's gonna send him out on another assignment... and WHAT an assignment it is! Nothing less than preventing the APOCALYPSE!

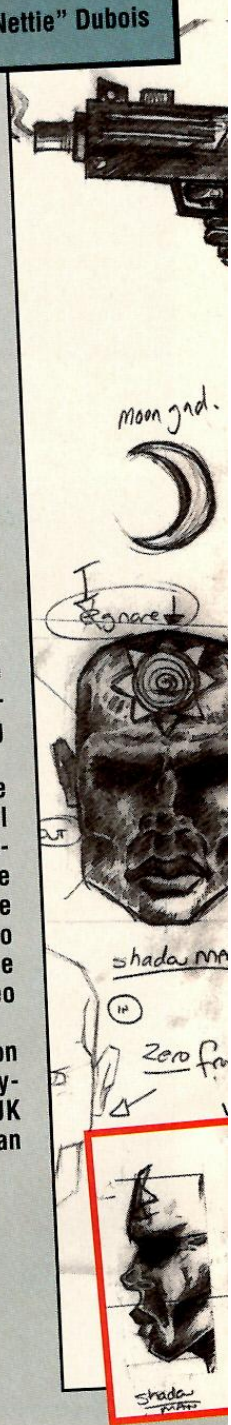
In the forthcoming SHADOWMAN video game from Acclaim Entertainment, Zero has to bounce back and forth between Liveside (you know, where *we* are...most of us) and Deadside (howling tortured souls, great gnashing of teeth, so on and so forth) in order to prevent some malfeasant from prying open the lid on the Deadside neighborhood called the Asylum. And what is Asylum? Where the souls of all the really bad people go — serial killers, genocidal madmen, and their ilk. Very important not to let that porthole open. Very *very* important!

In addition to Nettie and Jaunty, two regulars you've grown to know, love, and fear, Shadowman is joined in this game by the myriad denizens of Asylum, which are presented here — for the first time ever — for your viewing pleasure.

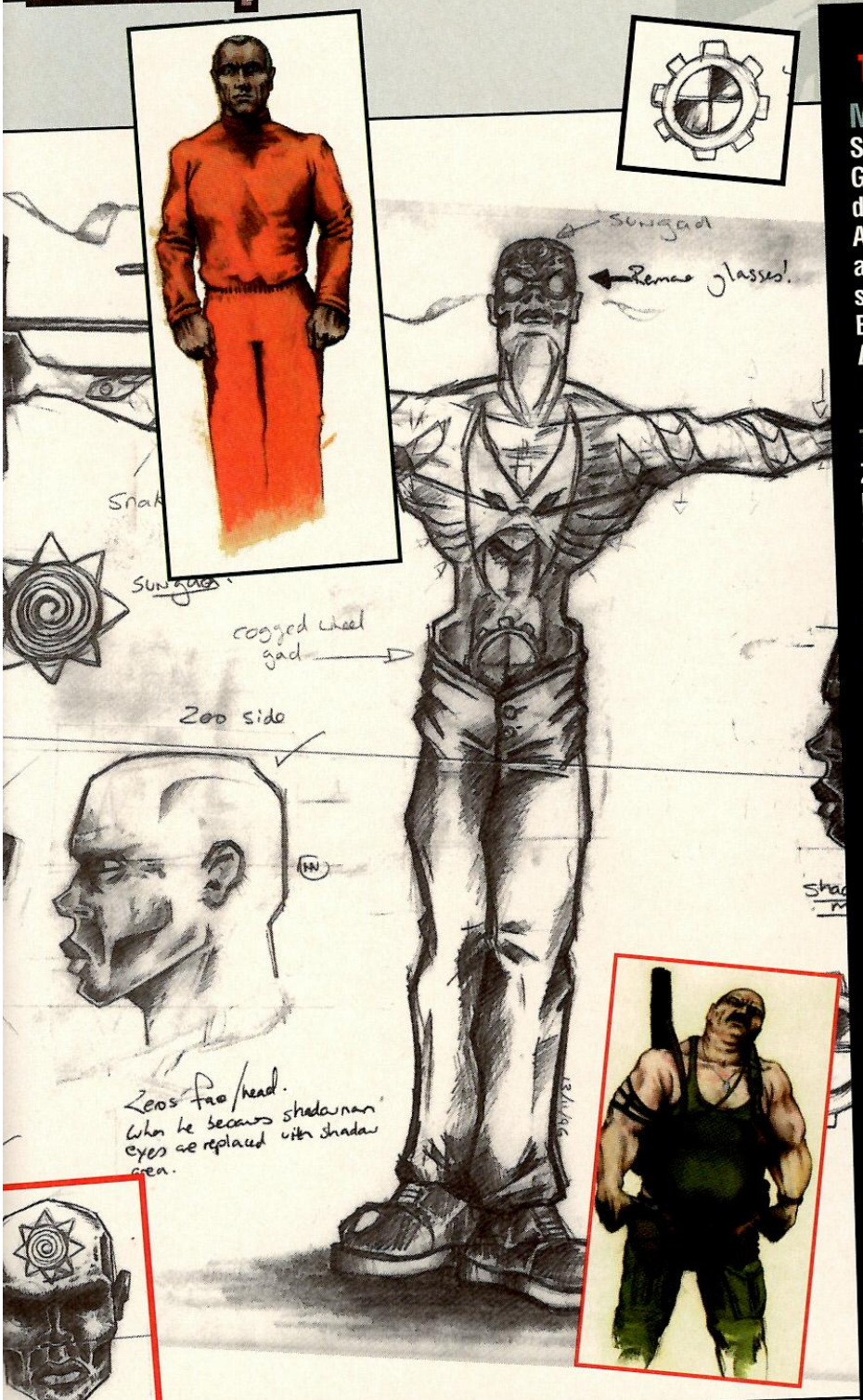
Just be aware that these are all preliminary character designs and the only way to see the *final* version is to check out the SHADOWMAN video game in '98!

Thanks to Simon Phipps and everybody at Iguana UK for the Shadowman info and images. See U in thirty.





ZERO


Remove glasses!
cogged wheel gad
Zeros face/head. When he becomes shadowman eyes are replaced with shadow area.
shadow man

ALSO OUT THIS MONTH:

MAGNUS #9

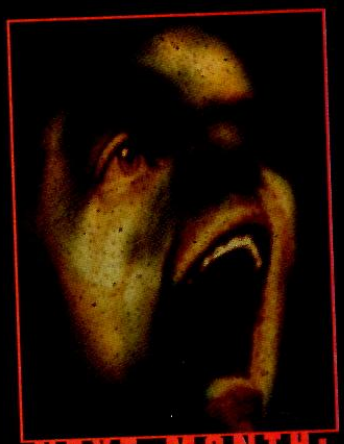
So, Magnus, you've just met God! What are you going to do now? "I'm going to Albania!" When Magnus and Good Shep have a showdown, will the Eastern Bloc ever be the same?

By Peyer, King, and McKenna

TROUBLEMAKERS #10

Zach befriends a boy who has terminal leukemia. Zach attempts to help him by trying to find a cure at Zeus: Control. If G&G can create such incredible powers, why can't they cure his friend?

By Nicieza, Wojtkiewicz, and Blyberg



NEXT MONTH:

Mike is none too pleased with having his vacation cut short by the *espirits des malchances*...but when he gets home to New Orleans, things go from bad to worse! Watch out, Shadowman...*here comes the Judge!* "Clear Blue Skies," part 2, by Delano and Adlard

Send your letters to:

SHADOWMAN
c/o ACCLAIM COMICS
275 7th Ave New York, NY 10001
vdorazio@aklm.com

GROUND

Things bubble and boil up here in the bayou, and there's a thick stew of good, nasty, *interesting* stuff coming your way over the coming months. Like the *Master Darque* event issue and *Darque Passages*, the mini-series that will follow it. Like some intriguing changes to *Shadowman* itself. *And* like the project I'm really jazzed about: the return of Ashley Wood to Acclaim's lineup, teamed up with *Hellblazer*'s Paul Jenkins on a neat little project that looks at some of the dark alleys and sunblazed corridors of the afterlife. Could it be...*Deadside*?

—Mad

MASTER DARQUE!

Folks, if you like your comics in a darker vein (and I know you do) and crave wild, intricate lovely lovely art (and I know you DO, snookums) and enjoy powerful storytelling full of the twists and turns that make life so exciting (and I KNOW you do, angel-muffin), Then *Master Darque*, out in October, is for you. I interviewed Christina Z., Darque writer, for all the specifics...

1) What's relationship between the *Master Darque* event book and *Shadowman*?

I know that in the old Valiant Universe, there was a ton of bad mojo between Master Darque and Shadowman. They were arch-enemies. In the new Valiant Universe, the two hardly know each other, at least so far. Shadowman does appear in the event story, actually, as someone who inadvertantly helps Darque achieve his goal! I think Alex and Zero are going to be seeing a lot more of each other next year.

2) Finish this sentence: "If you like *Shadowman*, you'll love *Master Darque* because..."

Because it picks up the horror and weirdness of the Shadowman universe and takes it to the furthest extreme! Right now, Zero is only beginning to understand the workings of Deadside, and the role of the supernatural in the Valiant Universe. Alex Darque has been dabbling in this insanity for centuries! He's in the major leagues!

3) Shadowman/Darque cross-overs in the works?

Hmm, crossover? Not any time too soon. I would like to develop the character much more thoroughly before having that happen. And when it does, it will be totally cool for those who dig Shadowman as well as Master Darque. This way, the crossover won't be deemed as just an "attempt" to gain readership on both books as it will be for a truly exciting storyline. I do think that Alex drops in on a party Zero's attending in an upcoming issue of SM.

(Darque does have a cameo in Shadowman #13, and there's a cameo by another VH character. A four legged character. With a cape.)

4) Any future Master Darque projects?

Oh, well, I can't divulge too much, but I'm hoping that if the *Darque Passages* mini-series is received well, it will go into a regular series or at the very least, a series of mini's. I think everyone realizes that Leonard Manco (penciller on *Master Darque*) and I have found a "calling" with this character, and who wouldn't want to see more of his stuff? I hope that people like the stories as well, and can promise to only make them more and more intriguing. Close your eyes and make that wish... Hopefully it will come true. (Turning other people onto the book would certainly help too!)

5) Word association!

Magnets: Oh, here's a secret for you motorcycle riders — I put a heavy magnet on the underside of my Suzuki's frame, and when you get to stop lights it helps you trigger it to green. Otherwise, it'll take forever to change!

Basil: Who couldn't possibly think of pasta?? I'm a fiend for Italian food and dig chomping on those leaves in some thick, creamy, marinara sauce... YUMMMM....

Tom Sawyer: My hero! Always wanted to be him and have cool adventures on a raft with Huck. Something about eating whole pies and escaping their grandma's castor oil treatments always made me root for him! Also reminds me of how Master Darque probably

Cover layout, logo, and letters page design by **COMICRAFT**

ZERO

was as a kid!

Toothbrush: Oh well this one is waaay too X-rated! Nah, just kidding. (Or am I?) Ha, I think of those bubblegum flouride treatments. Aren't those the best? You have to swish, like, for five mintues and feel it tingle...oooh....

Diet Orange Shasta: Something my Mom would buy 'cause it was on sale and make me drink! Yuck!!! Diet stuff—if it does'nt have saccharine—has Nutra-Sweet, which is really damaging to the body so watch out!

Duchovny: As in David? Oddly enough, the FIRST thing I think of is "cheap..." I've been reading many mags that say he is the cool stud in bed, but won't even spring for a breakfast when he's done! And Duchovny as Darque? NO WAY! That gives me the heebie-jeebies.

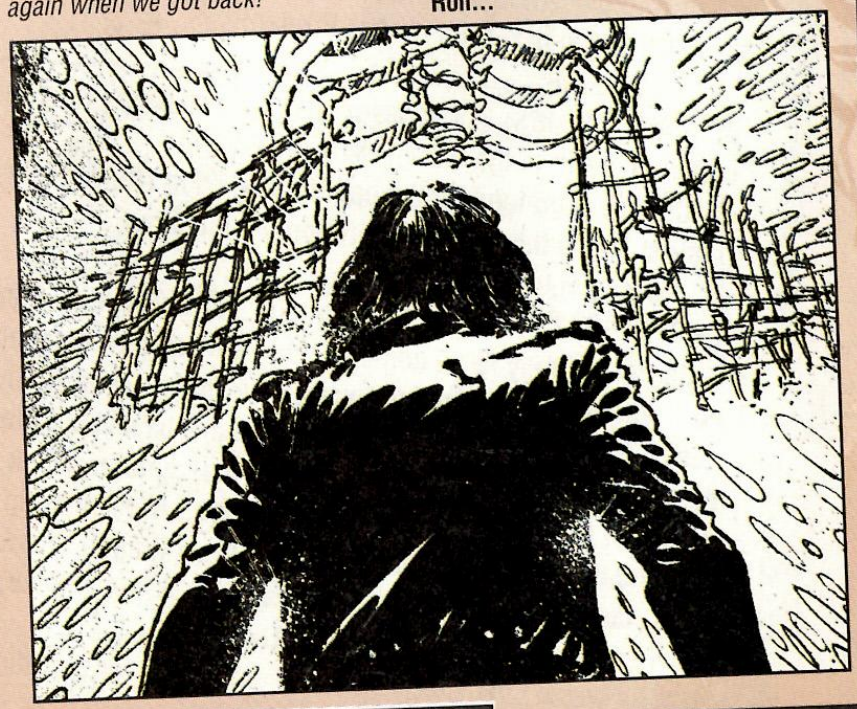
Alexander Darque remarks: *"First of all, not only would I spring for breakfast, we'd have a great lunch on the beach, go for a cool motorcycle ride up the coast and start all over again when we got back!"*

Um...start what all over again when we got back, Alex? More breakfast? :-)

Hope U enjoyed that lil' preview, ladies an' gents...pick up *Master Darque* this month, an' *Shadowman* #13 next month, and the month after that get *Shadowman* #14, and also pick up *Magnus* #9 and #10, and...

And keep those entries for the Shadowman Soundtrack contest coming in...I've got a lot of first-time letter-writers submitting to me, er, I mean...sending me submissions, and it's really really cool! I promise prizes, Valiant Voyeurs, special preview issues you can't get nowhere else....just come up with a bunch of "Desert Island Discs" you'd choose if you were making a *Shadowman* movie of your very own (see SM#10 for details).

Later. And if you ever find yourself on fire with voodoo flame...you know what to do, don't you, kids? Nope, it ain't "Stop, Drop, an' Roll..."



Send your letters to:

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275 7th Ave New York, NY 10001
vdorazio@aklm.com

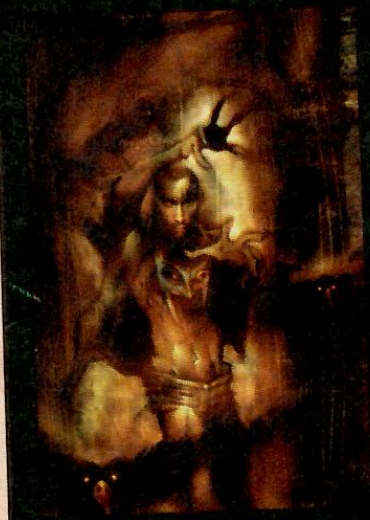
Please include your name and address, and the name and city of your comic shop. Addresses will be withheld upon request.

ALSO OUT THIS MONTH:

MAGNUS #9

You thought you know where babies come from? Magnus takes a trip back to his hometown and hometime: 4000 AD. What he learns may change his life! Finally, the can-busting skinny on Magnus's origin and his twisted relationship with the world's worst dad: The Good Shepherd! "The Memory."

By Peyer, King, and McKenna



NEXT MONTH:

The mojo hits the fan when Zero crashes the Judge's party...when the guest list is full of bocors, you can bet it'll be a case of... *it's my party and I'll die if I want to!* "The Hoodoo Bash, Part I."

By Delano and Adlard

GROUND

Shake out a coupla bags of chips (cajun flavor, of course) and put a couple dozen bottles of Abida Turbo Dog on ice! Mike's having a party. And just in case the band takes a break, we've got music for you. Valerie put it out there to y'all to come up with The *Shadowman* Soundtrack, and you did, bless your black li'l hearts! Some came in on paper, some on e-mail, one on cassette (that made Val's day). All were cool. So put on your best dancing shoes (blue suede, of course) and come on in. We may be playing your song!

—Mad

Yes...the results of the fabulous SHADOWMAN SOUNDTRACK CONTEST! Dear readers, here are a bunch of "Desert Island Discs" for the discriminating Shadowman reader to peruse, enjoy, and quite possibly sample. My thanx to all the entrants...as I love all your selections, and cannot possibly choose one best entry (tho I was thinking of just givin' trophies to the two people who chose "Dream Weaver"), I will try to get each and every one of you some sort of neat Shadowman-related prize.

Here we go...

Renee Montoure

1) "The Future" — Prince (off the *Batman* motion picture soundtrack)
2) "Temple of Love" — Sisters of Mercy
3) "Don't Fear the Reaper" — Gus (off the *Scream* soundtrack)(I know you mentioned this one, but this is a *nice* cover of it.)
4) "Machine Gun Lullaby" — Ennio Morricone (off *The Untouchables* soundtrack)
5) "I Love You Goodbye" — Thomas Dolby
6) "The Passenger" — Michael Hutchence (off the *Batman Forever* soundtrack)
7) "Shohmyoh," third move ment — Geinoh Yamashirogumi (off the *Akira* sound track)
8) "Natural One" — Folk Implosion (off the *KIDS* soundtrack)
9) "Dead Man's Party" — Oingo Boingo
10) "Juke-Joint Jezebel" — KMFDM
11) "Born Slippery" — Underworld (off the *Trainspotting* soundtrack)

James Lowe,
East Greenville PA

1) "I Love the Dead" — Alice Cooper
2) "Break On Through" — T he Doors
3) "Lady Evil" — Black Sabbath
4) "Magic Touch" — Aerosmith
5) "Dream Weaver" — Gary Wright
6) "Snake Charmer" — Rainbow
7) "I Speed At Night" — Dio
8) "It's Magic" — The Cars
9) "Waiting For Darkness" — Ozzy Osbourne
10) "Intrance" — Scorpions
11) "Black Juju" — Alice Cooper

"Dream Weaver"...the perfect companion song to "Hooked On A Feeling" and "Brandy," is it not?

RODA
Rodaism@fantasy.com

1) "Dead Souls" — Nine Inch Nails
2) "Vent" — Tricky
3) "Christian Sands" — Tricky
4) "My Evil Is Strong — Tricky
5) "Piano" — Tricky
6) "Bad Dreams" — Tricky
7) "Overcome" — Tricky
8) "Bad Things" — Tricky
9) "Hell Is Around The Corner" — Tricky
10) "Abbadon Pattrack" — Tricky
11) "The Cross" — The Artist Formerly Known As A Name I Could Type

Um, RODA...so, ah, you're a Tricky fan, eh?

Michael T Simmons
Troy, NY

1) "Bloodletting" — Concrete Blonde... Great Gothic feel as well as mentioning New Orleans
2. "Voodoo Lady" — Ween...This could be subtitled Nettie's theme
3. "Zero" — Smashing Pumpkins... No explanation needed
4. "I put a spell on you" — Dimanda Glass... Wonderful voice and eerie mood
5. "Man in a Long Black Coat" — Joan Osborn..Maybe for

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Cover layout, logo, and letters page design by COMICRAFT

ZERO

someone who is feeling a little cat like right now.

6. "Happiness in Slavery" — NIN...Good description of Zero's situation with Nettie
7. "Cryptorchid" — Marilyn Manson..Hell If I know what it means but it sounds cool and scares me
8. "House of the Rising Sun" — The Animals...An oldie but a goodie...brings you right to The Big Easy

Gary Freeman
Springfield, MA
Side 1
1) "Prologue" — Mephisto Waltz
2) "Love in Vein" — Skinny Puppy
3) "Voodoo Lady" — Ween
4) "Surprise! You're Dead!" — Faith No More
5) "Welcome To My Nightmare" — Alice Cooper
6) "Dead Man's Party" — Oingo Boingo
7) "I'm Your Boogieman" — White Zombie
8) "In the Springtime of His Voodoo" — Tori Amos
9) "The Black Dog Runs at Night" — Angelo Badalamenti

Side 2
1) "The Three Shadows (Part 1)" — Bauhaus
2) "Stigmata" — Ministry
3) " Bloodletting" — Concrete Blonde
4) "Hierate Mich" — Rammstein
5) "Voodoo City" — Black 47
6) "Nightmare" — Mercyful Fate
7) "The Becoming" — Nine Inch Nails
8) "Voodoo Idol" — The Cramps
9) "I Put A Spell On You" — Marilyn Manson
10) "Burn The Flames" — Roky Erickson

Lou Renzo
Clifton, NJ
1) "Welcome To My Nightmare" — Alice Cooper
2) "Josie" — Steely Dan
3) "Dream Weaver" — Gary Wright
4) "Red Right Hand" — Nick Cave and the Bad Seeds
5) "Casting A Spell" — Robert Palmer
6) "Zombie Stomp" — Ozzy Osbourne
7) "Soul Crusher" — White Zombie
8) "My Dark Life" — Elvis Costello and Brian Eno
9) "Hands Of Death" — Rob Zombie and Alice Cooper
10) "How Much Did You Get For Your Soul" — Pretenders
11) " Spirits in the Material World" — The Police

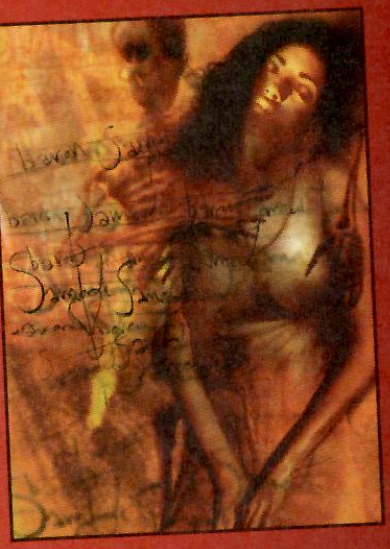
ALSO OUT THIS MONTH:

MAGNUS #11
Good Shepherd's Albania is in a blackout and the Free World is freaking out! NATO is talking war—and Magnus is talking *merger* with Angel Industries. Is he selling out or getting devious? Featuring the dynamic debut of new artist Axel Gimenez! *By Peyer and Gimenez*

TROUBLEMAKERS #12
Accidently shot in a drive-by shooting, a Troublemaker is dead. How did it happen? And most important of all — what happens next? A major turning point in the lives of the Troublemakers, and the understanding of their powers. *by Nicieza, West, and Davis*

NEXT MONTH:

Things are heating up at Shadowman's soiree by the bayou: the Judge is crashing the party with a whole lot of mayhem. Meanwhile, Nettie and the master Loa, Baron Samedi, have a deadly bet on Shadowman's future...if Mike goes Deadside, will Nettie be far behind?
"The Hoodoo Bash," part 2, by Delano, Foreman, and Adlard



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GROUND

A while back, we mentioned a little project called *Deadside*, being written by Paul Jenkins and painted by *Shadowman's* own Ashley Wood (from *Shadowman* 1-4, and all the covers since, as if you didn't know). The 4-issue mini is fully-painted, fully gorgeous, and not for the faint of heart. And since you're such good friends, we thought we'd show off a couple of pieces we've received!

Every time Ashley turns in a page all of Acclaim's production and editorial staff stand over my shoulder going "Oooooh!" "Aaaaah!" And Paul Jenkins's story is no less worthy of sighs of admiration! So get ready to feast your eyes on this little undead appetizer we're serving up. All together now: "Oooooh! Aaaaah!"

—Mad

Dear Editors of *Shadowman*,

Shadowman is one of my favorite series. It's strange how much the title has changed in so few issues. I can only applaud Jamie Delano and Charles Adlard's efforts on this book. No, I am not sorry to see Garth Ennis leave because Delano is doing an admirable job. Ashley Wood's covers are absolutely a delight. The coloring also seems to particularly fit this book. Delano's language is at times a tad too crude. However, I can forgive him because he's weaving a very engaging story. I especially enjoy the fact that the book has finally become a mature book and not just a string of explosions. There seems to be a certain chemistry in the Delano-Adlard team. Each seems to know what the other is thinking. Please don't lose this great team.

P.S.: I just wanted to say that this won't be my last letter. I'll keep buying Acclaim comics for the foreseeable future and soon I'll write again.

Max Caprelli
Perugia, Italy

Hey,

I just saw a cryptic comment in PREVIEWS about *Shadowman* and it not being a "mature-readers" comic very much longer...can you clarify this for me?

Is it going to become more "reader friendly"? I sure hope not, because I liked the book as it was.

Thanks if you answer my questions for me,

David

Well, David...basically, a book that is not labeled "mature-readers" means that:

1) We can say the word "nippleage," but can't show it.

2) We can show a head exploding only if it is tastefully done.

3) Lots of words such as "shick," frig," and "diddle" to communicate anger or recreational activities.

However, one thing that the absence of the "mature-readers" label does NOT mean is a less sophisticated story. Still good story, still great art. More info next issue.

***Deadside* is a good example of a book that is not labeled "mature-readers" but is still mature, gripping, and...chock full o' the carnage you've come to expect from *Shadowman* and *Master Darque*. I will say no more, but let you bask in the subtle intricacies (and rampant coolness) that is Ashley Wood's paintings... write in and tell us what you think!**

Cover Painting by ASHLEY WOOD
Cover layout, logo, and letters page design by COMICRAFT

ZERO

ALSO OUT THIS MONTH:

MAGNUS #12

Albania and the U.S. are at war. Magnus is in the middle, in a final face-off with the Good Shepherd! This time Magnus has all the hi-tech weaponry Angel computer can build...but will it be enough? And there's a player no one knows anything about. Which side is he on?

By Peyer, Gimenez, and Florimonte

NEXT MONTH:

Zero takes a stroll through Deadside... Brute fires up the grill for some Shadow-Meat... and the Judge meets his maker! "The Hoodoo Bash, Part III" by Delano, Foreman, and Adlard

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GROUND

HAIL AND FAREWELL

Only in this book would the hero samba off into the sun*rise* with his beautiful hoodoo babe.... Zero's come into some power in the Big Easy; Nettie's laid her enemies to rest (for now) and this seems like a natural breaking point. And it is. There's a whole new world waiting for *Shadowman* starting next issue: new writer, new art team, new editorial team. I won't say I won't miss Mike and Nettie and their other arcane pals, but I will say that I've seen the preview book of *Shadowman* #16: the art is cool, the story is very cool (written by a real voodoo practitioner—you want authentic?) and even the editorial team—my former assistant Gregg Sanderson, and his dauntless backup, Alex Glass—is cool.

It's been a privilege getting Mike up on his feet, working with Ashley, Garth, Jamie and Charlie—and it will be a privilege watching what Serge and Klayton do next. So y'all come back next month to see what's up. You're gonna like it. I'll be here too (just lurking in the shadows, which somehow seems appropriate, y'know?).

— un beso. Mad

As Mad put it so elegantly in her Shadnote, this is our last issue of *Shadowman*. I thought you'd like to have a preview of next issue, and what better way than to speak with the new editor, Gregg Sanderson.

Hi, Gregg.
Hiya, Val. So, Serge Clermont didn't return your calls, huh? But seriously, good morning.

How ya doin'?
I'm doing just fine. I'm making a killing on these glossy photos of the Acclaim holiday party. A small fee gets you those that feature you. A substantial fee gets you the negatives too!

I just wanted to start by saying that I'm totally not bitter about turning over *Shadowman* to you and Alex. You two are fine gentlemen.
Flatterer. And let me say there are no lovelier ladies we'd rather swindle a title from than you and Madeleine.

Tell us what cool stuff you guys've got planned for *Shadowman*.
Hoo-boy, do things change in a hurry! Readers should look forward to Zero becoming EXTREMELY independent, although at a very painful price. There are new additions to the voodoo power structure, and a return of a supporting character not seen in some time. With the move to a General Audience comic (now anyone of any age can legally buy *Shadowman*), our new writer/artist team of Serge Clermont and Klayton Krain promise to keep the complexity of the stories and characters, while kicking the visceral and mythic quality of this comic into high gear. Just check out the samples that Val picked out and peek for yourself!

Any cross-overs planned for the future?
Oh, yeah, I forgot to mention that Shadowman will become a big part of the workings of the Valiant Universe. The effects of the magical happenings here will ripple through our other books, and yes, keep your eyes out for some Valiant Heroes stepping onto our stage here, as well as Shadowman visiting other heroes' territories.

Hey, you were assistant editor on this book for a while before me... for a whole eight issues... one more than me...*sob!* Gregg, how can you be so cruel as to deny me full eight-issue status?! You wanted *Shadowman*... you always wanted *Shadowman*! GAhhhhhhh... I've slaved and sweated over this book for seven issues, and look at what I have reaped...nothing!...*sob!*...nothing...I hope you're HAPPY! Here, take ya stinkin' *Shadowman*... I don't want it... I...I'm...not bitter... not... bit... ter... So...uh, Gregg, tell us something about the new creative team on this book.
Coffee, Val, coffee would be a good idea right about now. Ought to fix you good. Anyway, Serge Clermont, a voodoo practitioner himself, a writer in other media, is new to comics, and has big plans for pumping up the volume in this title, and diving straight in to explore Shadowman's character, and his journey as a hero. Klayton Krain is an exciting convention discovery whose detailed, illustrative style is definitely a departure from Charlie Adlard's own approach, and a great match for this comic in its current direction.

Cool. Thanks for the interview, Gregg.
You got it, Val. Coffee is our friend on Mondays, no?

And there you have it.

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Cover layout, logo, and letters page design by COMICRAFT

ZERO

ALSO OUT THIS MONTH:

MAGNUS #13
Albania's just a little bit gone right now...blown clear out of here to...somewhere else. "Be Here Now" *by Peyer, Gimenez, and Ryder*

NEXT MONTH:

Having captured Shadowman, the coven that made him rips the Mask of Shadows right of out of his chest! But he's far from helpless, and to the coven's dismay, Shadowman unleashes a beast he never knew he had! By Clermont, Krain, and Temujin

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AFTER

A NOTE FROM THE HELP

Some will tell you that nothing really changes at night. But we know better. Scientific arguments aside, your gut will tell you that people, places, and things do change when the sun sets. If it didn't, you might not be reading this comic. For these reasons, and others, this column is so named After Dark.

As a rule of thumb, I will take up a bit of space at the beginning of this column to talk about something Shadow-related. If I don't have anything non-self-indulgent to speak on, my assistant Alex "Fang" Glass will break out the big blue bat, and knock my head in. The rest of this column will be devoted to your thoughts on this book, your drawings (we should have space for a piece of fan art next time), and any rantings you'd like to share, that come to you After Dark.

This installment of the Shadowman lore brings a truckload of changes: new writer, penciler, and inker, and a new editorial team. Oh, yeah, a new logo and letter column title, too. Not to mention a decidedly healthy (we hope) turn in direction for Shadowman himself. Our intent is to make this comic more exciting, more closely intertwined with other Acclaim Heroes continuity (actually, the events in this book will have very far-reaching ripple effects across the rest of the Acclaim Universe), and more tightly focused on Zero's development, all the while maintaining the sophistication of storytelling that *Shadowman* readers have come to expect.

We've included the brief lowdown on the primaries of our new creative team. Your marching orders are to let us know how they did out of the gate. Gotta go, here comes Fang with the bat...

—Gregg

Still Fluffy, dammit

SERGE F. CLERMONT

Serge Clermont has ample experience in dealing with this Voudou-oriented title. His paternal grandmother was a psychic of such renown in her mountain home on the island of Hispanola, that she was perceived as a threat to the dictatorial administration of Haitian President-for-Life Papa Doc. She and her family were subsequently burned out of their home by the TonTon Macoutes (Haitian Secret Police).

Serge's father married a young Haitian woman who also possessed an uncanny affinity for divination and Voudou. She had declined a position in Haiti as a mambo (Voudou priestess) in favor of a more Catholic spirituality.

It was into this home in Queens, New York that Serge Clermont was born. After a severe car accident at the age of four, Serge demonstrated his own clairvoyance, communicating with ghosts and acting as a medium, until another head injury at thirteen resulted in their dormancy.

Serge Clermont has provided creative and research assistance for various role-playing game systems, and written short story anthologies for New York publishing houses, and Internet web sites and numerous articles for magazines such as *Gateways*. Now situated in Atlanta, Georgia, Serge is writing a dark fantasy novel fictionalizing his experiences with the occult world.

Shadowman is Serge's first professional comics work.

KLAYTON KRAIN

Klayton Krain was born in Redmond, Oregon and raised in Yakima, Washington, where he still resides. Like many artists in the industry, Klayton has been largely self-taught in illustration.

Klayton's work experience began with an independent comic called *342*. He learned to handle the grind of professional art and found he had the ability to produce great-looking artwork when an editor demanded.

In February, 1997, twenty-two-year-old Klayton headed off on a nine-hour drive to a convention in Seattle. He recognized Fabian Nicieza from an article in *Wizard* and approached him. Being the last in a very long line of artists, Klayton figured Fabian would dismiss him. But Fabian saw something in Klayton's work and asked for more samples. Duly impressed, Fabian offered him *Shadowman*, and the results are here for your reading pleasure.

Klayton enjoys movies, and pays close attention to how directors choreograph action sequences. Director Luc Besson's *Fifth Element*, *The Professional*, and *La Femme Nikita* are some personal favorites. Music helps a lot, as well. Since starting on *Shadowman*, he's been listening to a lot of *Nine Inch Nails*. Go figure...

Fang here. Ok, You've met the players, you've seen the game. Now here's your two cents...and mine, KEEP WRITING!!

Dear Shadowy Guys,

I read *Shadowman* #14 this morning and it was amazing! Jamie Delano, Dick Foreman, Charles Adlard, and the gang are doing a brilliant job on *Shadowman* and I am sad to see that they are leaving as of next issue! Their run has been terrific and I would like to wish them the best on their future projects.

At first I was a tad concerned that this book was going to become a cruddy book after it switched to its "Non-Mature Readers" format, but then I got the preview copy of issue #16 and it looks incredible! The new crew looks very impressive and I can't wait until they start their run on *Shadowman*.

My favorite part of #14 was when Zero got his spine bitten out of his back by Bruté! That looked painful as all hell. Cool though, huh? Anyway, I hope before Delano, Foreman, and

Cover layout, logo, and letters page design by COMICRAFT

DARK

Adlard leave we will see a lot more spilt blood!

Anyway, I have to get going now, but I'll write back the next time I can! I would like to say before I go that the painted pictures of the *Deadside* miniseries look astonishing. When is it going to be coming out? Well, I'll see you soon y'all!

Your pal and biggest fan,

Rob Haney
Machesney Park, IL
Tomorrow Is Yesterday

By the way, thanks to everyone at Acclaim for the signed copy of *Revelations* and those cool preview comics! They rule!

We can only hope that you like what comes after the conclusion of "The Hoodoo Bash," Mr. Haney. We're certainly glad you liked the preview!

Dear *Shadowman* Crew,

A few days ago, my retailer had, again, a surprise for me: a review copy of *Shadowman* #16. *Shadowman* has been my favorite original Valiant book (after *Archer & Armstrong* was canceled), and it wasn't even affected by Birthquake which changed most of your books (excluding *Solar* and maybe *Turok)* into lame copies of what they'd been before. When it was canceled with #43, Jack Boniface wasn't dead (yet), so I hoped for a resurrection of the book, but slowly the Valiant Universe died away. Which saved me a lot of money because I had bought (and still buy) all your comics.

Along came VH2 and with it a book that bore the name *Shadowman,* but it was absolutely different from its predecessor, had a very different feeling and I didn't like it except for the covers. Yes, I got a resurrection of Jack Boniface, but it was definitely not the way I had wanted it.

Now, with the review copy and some colored pages in Previews I see at last some light. I even enjoyed reading *Shadowman* again. I don't know where this story leads or why Persephone had to die but I loved the art. It reminded me of the first comic art of some other people who made their debut at Valiant and are now respected artists like David Lapham, Bernard Chang, Sean Chen, Jim Califiore, and Rags Morales (give this guy more work, he's great) and...Klayton Krain, this is your chance!

This book has a future again and I hope it's a long one! And now I have to "get the goat" for the Wizard...

Günter Bouwer
Hannover, Germany

If this isn't a ringing endorsement for our Preview Copy Program, I don't know what is. We apologize if you felt you had to endure storylines you didn't like but also are eternally grateful that you did. I enjoyed the last several takes on the Man From Voodoo, and if there is a *Shadowman* novel, Jamie Delano would be the man to write it. In reference to ol' Jack Boniface, I think it was felt all around that no one could really approach what Bob Hall had done for almost forty issues with our favorite jazz-playing zombie-hunter. We hope you still like Zero when the "new team" dust settles. Or at least respect him. "Cuddles" Banmally is thrilled that you're "going for the goat" by the way.

Dear Editors,

Are you crazy?! Replacing Jamie Delano with Serge Clermont?! Who is that? Just when you have a decent writer on your payroll, you go and blow it. I would think that in these days of "poor comic sales," you would look to the veteran writers first, but I guess not. On top of this, you decide to cancel the book's "suggested for mature readers" label! What gives? The label gives the author much more freedom and the title more realism. Not cheesy Marvel-like characters. I guess I'll have to stick with Vertigo. The only Acclaim title my friends and I get is *Shadowman,* but I think #15 will be my last. Sorry, guys.

WM
New York, NY

Unfortunately, this letter is also an endorsement for the Preview Copy program. WM didn't provide his address, for if he had, we would have sent him a copy of the *Shadowman* #16 Preview tout suite. We wouldn't expect someone to buy a book by a brand-new team without showing them at least a taste. However, in our defense, the first year and a half were developed by two seriously "veteran writers." Also, if we're rethinking how the book should be developed, starting with an African-American former New Orleans resident whose religion happens to be Voodoo would be a good place to start, eh?

ALSO OUT THIS MONTH:

DARQUE PASSAGES #3

Sandria, Brixton, and the mysterious Roses struggle to help Darque stay one step ahead of the deadly Epoch Twins. But when the fabric of time itself begins to fray, how long can Darque hold back the shadows? *By Christina Z. and Leonardo Manco.*

BLOODSHOT #12

Warcat — the genetically altered superkiller — really would love to terminate Bloodshot ... if only she could keep her hands off him! It's love, hate, sex and Vietnam! What a naughty little kitty! With special guest penciler Kevin Kobasic!

NEXT MONTH

Zero speeds along the vengeance trail seeking to regain the Mask of Shadows, and his sanity! But being out of control with new-found power may be just what the Bocor ordered to defeat his replacement in the world of assassination, the deadly Mah! Shadowman's very brief mentorship with Pére Jean may come to an end when Pére tries to interfere in Mah's plans for our Voodoo hero. This two-parter, introducing a brand new writer/artist team, spirals to an explosive conclusion right here in Old New Orleans! By Clermont, Krain, and Temujin.

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AFTER

A NOTE FROM THE HELP

It always seems I come to appreciate a teacher long after the class has ended (or the person is no longer around—not all lessons are learned in the lecture hall!), and sometimes too late to thank the teacher for what they passed on to me. Shadowman himself may have run into that same problem in this issue. I'm not going to make the same mistake here...

Ya see, I wasn't always a full-blown editor, with all the glory and spoils such a title is renowned to bestow. No, sir, I was once but an Assistant Editorial gleam in the eye of... somebody, I guess. Last issue I had not the space to acknowledge those who have made me the editorial gale force I am today (I see them wincing now: "Not me, please, for the love of the Loa, let him not name me."). So, the following are folks (listed alphabetically) I'd like to thank for what they've passed on to me in my ascension, and, like it or not, I remembered quite a lot of what they said and try to incorporate it into what I do: Jeff Gomez, Teresa Nielsen-Hayden, Madeleine Robins, and Evan Skolnick.

Specifically, I'd like to make special mention of Madeleine, under whom I toiled endlessly for a while (and who edited this title until issue #15), and Jeff, who kinda hired me (thanks for that tip on the proofreading test, Jeff!), and was the guy to edit this book before Hollywood lured him away.

Not everybody has the luxury to make such a public 'thanks' like this one, but there's always an opportunity to let them know you were paying attention. Just hope it doesn't go to their heads too much.

—Gregg
Refusing to toss Fabian a fricking bone

Subject: *Shadowman* #15

Goodbye and thanks! You weren't saving the best for last — the ending seemed a bit rushed, and although Nettie's revelation was shocking it tied things up a little too neatly with the Judge. Was this planned in advance or to accommodate the new creative crew? Lots of nice touches — Mike's removing Bruté's badness, Baron Samedi's comment to Nettie on page 3, panel 1 and the guy pissing on his own foot on page 1 (can that still be done in a code-approved title?) to name but three. Delano was almost as good at the end as he was at the beginning and that's saying something.

Shadowman has a really solid foundation and strong direction so I suppose it's inevitable that it all be thrown away next issue. Oh well. Adlard's art will be missed too. Worrying time for Acclaim fans — new team on *X-O* and *Shadowman*, cancellation of *Bloodshot* to come. And the good news is a Goat one-shot??

No letters again this time either. Lack of letters? Seems to be an increasing tendency to cut down on letters by showing previews of upcoming stuff. Can't say as I approve.

Good luck with future projects and best of luck to the new *Shadowman* team. God or fill-in-the-Deity knows they'll need it to follow this act.

Paul Hayward
pjhay@clara.net

Mr. Delano was not requested to 'finish up quick' to make way for a new art team. He was so dang fast he was finished well before. As we know now, he will not be continuing as the writer for this book, but we certainly hope to work with him in the future. Charles Adlard is currently working on some Classics issues with our own Madeleine Robins, proving that there are some happy endings.

Re: *Shadowman #16*

Just got the Retailer Review from Brent Erwin at Acclaim and I am totally floored. I mean, I am amazed at how a book can go from one place to another in one issue. *Shadowman #16* will EASILY be one of the best Valiant books of 1998 and I mean it. And I want you to mean it as well. So we're all in this together.

The new artistic team is simply amazing -- it's *Eternal Warriors: Digital Alchemy* quality artwork. They have a new bad guy in town and he strips Shadowman of the mask, but now they have the unstoppable Zero to contend with, AND he STILL has the powers of a Shadowman. Pére Jean, the new bad guy, then totally whips Nettie's ass and banishes her for good.

We then follow Nettie as she recounts the legacy of Shadowmen for thousands of years into the past (just like the legacy of the Geomancers, and this also gives me goose bumps) as Zero kicks ass on Earth. This non-stop hayride is guaranteed to whip whatever else is coming out this month!

Acclaim Ink. E-Zine Vol 3 Issue 2
Joe Petrilak

If Joe were any more excited,

Shadowman #17 marks the second issue in which we're no longer able to sound like a Martin Scorsese film. However, when the directive came down (because it never goes up) that "suggested for mature readers" was out, Fabe told us that didn't mean it had to be fancy cakes and flower wine. This preamble leads to something worthwhile...

A CONTEST!

Try to think of the most extreme act that we would be able to do in a general audience book. And you don't have to stay in the gutter, it could even be more socially mature stuff as well. The final judge will be us the editors with any honorable mentions (well, those that we *can* mention) being printed.

The Prize? Hmmm. We'll offer up a full set of Valiant Voyeurs, and a Master Darque preview.

Get ta writin'.

Cover layout, logo, and letters page design by COMICRAFT

DARK

there'd be an accident. When your boss says "Hey, how 'bout letting *this* guy draw the book...?" you tend to get a little nervous. But, what a shock, Fabe was right. We're lovin' what Klayton is doing and I think you'll agree he's getting better with every issue.

Re: *Shadowman* #16

Inertia can be a terrible thing — and really, only inertia has kept *Shadowman* on my reading list for the past year and a quarter. The series commenced weakly enough with a story arc by Garth Ennis, writing less like the creator of *Preacher* than like the perpetrator of *Dicks*; his four issues were illustrated by a forgettable artist who seemed equipped with little more than a toothbrush and Acclaim hype.

After their tenure came the solid craftsmanship of artist Charlie Adlard, joined by writer Jamie Delano, and in the last few issues, Delano has shared the writing credit (in one of those suspicious "partnerships" that make one wonder just how much or how little each partner's contributing) with Dick Foreman, whose work on Vertigo's *Black Orchid* so underwhelmed me that issues of it remain unread on my shelf from more than four years ago. The January *Shadowman* concludes their run, which inspires less sadness than relief — because it also marks my own departure as a reader. In 15 issues, appallingly, nothing in *Shadowman* beyond Adlard's promising art has qualified the title for support: at best, its characters seemed tiresomely amoral, its themes tiresomely nihilistic, its plots tiresomely grisly or lascivious. Next issue debuts "artistic discovery" (read "cheap neophyte") Klayton Krain, and writer Serge Clermont, whom Acclaim has been touting as a "real voodoo practitioner" (according to which editorial acumen Marvel's next *Punisher* revival should be scripted by Bernhard Goetz). They have my best wishes...but not my two and a half bucks.

Bryan A. Hollerbach
The Comic Book Cabala 1.10.1998
St. Louis, Missouri
bryan.hollerbach@ey.com

There is nothing tougher to see than a long time fan on his last legs. I can only be grateful that he stayed for a year and a half with only one creator on a book that he liked. While many people have been touted as an "artistic discovery" and then vanished faster than Brian Bosworth from the NFL, we stand by our men. You already know what I think of Klayton, though technically he *is* a neo-phyte, and he is drawing for a coupon-book of food stamps.... Oh, yeah, we sent Bryan a preview. His response next issue...

Dear Shadowy Guys,

I'm basically trying to get some free stuff. Here's a pic I did of Mike, the new Shadowman. How 'bout a Shadowman Voyeur and a b/w *Master Darque* Preview? *Shadowman #11* got the title back on track. Issues #9 and #10 had very odd pacing, there seemed to be too much info thrown at the reader at the same time. Hey, can you guys keep the lettering off of Ashley's great covers like on #11?

Saban Ross
Borden town NJ

Those prizes are bagged and tagged and on their way, Saban! Gregg and I couldn't keep those pesky balloons off the covers but we hope you like the new look anyway!

ALSO OUT THIS MONTH:

TUROK #1 — Now Monthly!
Dig the funky 3-D computer-rendered cover and then check out the monthly series as it starts with a bang! Does Joshua Fireseed decide to kill the President or not? Only Turok knows that the Commander-in-Chief is really a no-good, stinking DINOSOID! Or is he? If no one believes Turok—and no one is willing to help him—does he have the guts take the tough call? And just wait until you see the Lost Land village of the FOUR-BREASTED WOMEN!
By Nicieza, Kayanan and Hillsman

DARQUE PASSAGES #4 OF 4
Sandria is in deadly peril; the barriers between worlds are crumbling; and an army of demons are waiting to enforce the Epoch Twins' claim to rule. Even the power Darque has consumed for centuries may not be enough to hold back the tides of Hell—unless... There's a secret player Darque needs on his side—before it's too late! *By Christina Z. and Leonardo Manco.*

NEXT MONTH:

All right, just about now, Shadowman's really looking to stop, regroup, maybe settle back with a beer. Tough. Mysterious figures seek to steal Claudine away from him (and she just got back from Deadside!). But these attackers are far more than they appear. It's a journey to Deadside like you've never seen before!

Send your letters to:

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c/o ACCLAIM COMICS
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aglass@aklm.com

Please include your name and address, and the name and city of your comic shop. Addresses will be withheld upon request.

AFTER

PAPA SHANGO'S HOUSE OF VOODOO

Zombies. Entranced worshippers. Curses hurled by malevolent witch doctors. Decapitated chickens. Screams in the night. Drums thundering through the bayou. Dolls adorned with the hair of a victim and skewered with needles to cause pain to the imitated.

Thanks to fiction and the media, these are the images that are commonly invoked when someone mentions "voodoo"..and the true voudounists like it that way. In fact, it's a very spiritual practice that is perhaps a bit more practical than other religions, being formed from the hopes of an oppressed people. This month, and from now on, we'll provide either a glossary or perhaps describe a ritual or some history of this enigmatic faith. We hope this will add an extra dimension to your enjoyment of the Shadowman Mythos:

Hounfor: The 'temple' of a Voodoo priest, including the paraphernalia of the service and understood to include the persons who serve there. When used in juxtaposition to *peristyle*, it means an actual altar chamber.

Houngon: Voodoo priest. Literally chief, *gan*, of the spirits, *houn*, from the language of the Fon people.

Les Mystéres: Generic term comprising all the invisible spirits including the *Loa*, the souls of the deceased. Also, Les Mystéres can mean a *Loa*, as distinct from the spirits of the Dead; in some contexts it could also be understood as referring to the rituals, in the sense of the 'mysteries.'

Loa: Deity or deities of Haiti.

Govi: Red earthen vessel in which the spirits of the dead or the Loa are lodged. This term is used only in reference to such sacred vessels, as contrasted to *canari*, which refers to all earthen vessels.

Ti-Bon-Ange: The spirit, or conscience, of a person as differentiated from their gros-bon-ange, or soul.

Gros-Bon-Ange: The soul of a person, his metaphysical double.

Ange: Angel or soul.

Of course, if any of you budding voudounists have any questions on this fascinating religon, just tap out a message on the big log!

Dear Acclaim crew.

DAMN!

That's all I could say when I saw what had happened to Shadowman in issue 16. Damn, hadda say it again. I'll tell you a short story, SHADOWMAN (of the first series) was the first comic I ever collected, and what brought me onto the scene of comics. I was in the mall, and happened to pass a comic shop, so I decided to step in. I glanced through those X-books, and laughed at how dumb they seemed. Then I saw two books that caught my attention: SHADOWMAN and *Spawn*, sitting side by side, in alphabetical order. I grabbed by both and bought them, hurrying home to read them both as fast as I could. I liked *Spawn* a lot!!!! But something about SHADOWMAN seemed more appealing to me, something darker...now what's the word I'm looking for...Hmmmm.... Oh yeah, VOODOO!!!!! I enjoyed 43 issues and loved them dearly, until the sad departure of the series. Oh, I still collected other comics, like SOLAR for one and the X-O and TUROK series, but they all ended when SHADOWMAN stopped publication. I simply stopped collecting comics, period. Then I heard that SHADOWMAN was coming back, so I rushed back to my comic store and reserved the first issue, (later the specially painted one which I didn't know about) and have bought every issue. Sad to say, I had begun to drift away again, that is, UNTIL the new SHADOWMAN crew hopped on and brought back the great arc and story telling I loved about the first series. I still do miss Jack, but hey, it's time for someone new, I guess. All I have to say is thanks for bringing back the great story telling that brought me into the comics world. And if you keep it up, I'll be staying for a long, long time. By the way, glad to finally get a peek at what Nettie looked like, and how powerful she really is, but it left me wondering about the future, I only wish I knew what was coming up around the corner, especially what part Shadowman will play in the 1999 crossover thingy. Well, great job, keep it up, later.

Isaac Gonzalez
Denver, CO

What more needs be said? Except, that 1998 will be pretty hot as well. Stay tuned for THE FINAL SOLUTION on sale this July.

As promised, here's the letter sent in from Bryan A. Hollerbach, who last issue ripped us a new one over the creative team change:

Printed in *The Comic Book Cabala,*

Cover layout logo and letters page design by COMICRAFT

DARK

24 January 1998:
SHADOWMAN Vol. 2, No. 16 (February 1998) ACCLAIM, ($2.50).

Give Acclaim credit for grit. After receiving the prior *Cabala* pan of SHADOWMAN — which, in a cover letter, assistant editor Alexander Glass noted made "us wince a little bit" — the company dispatched by priority mail a black-and-white review copy of that title under the new creative team of writer Serge Clermont and artist Klayton Krain. Amusingly, the neophytes acquit themselves better than their far more seasoned predecessors. Clermont's script commences ably with a clever, well-paced numeric conceit, and various narrative devices and designs herein suggest a desire on his part to elevate SHADOWMAN from the intellectual chamber pot in which it's previously stewed. To be sure, his relative unfamiliarity with the medium (a capsule bio identifies this as his first professional comics work) manifests variously throughout: characters herein speechify at the oddest moments — making me double-check the spelling of Clermont's surname — and certain transitions, both between scenes and between panels, just flat fail. Krain's work, meanwhile, brings to mind that of Paul Gulacy and Marshall Rogers; it should come as no surprise, then, that some of his characters look gaunt and stiff. Still, Krain bears watching. As with any artistic newcomer, one can only speculate whether his aesthetic will develop after that of, say, David Mazzucchelli — or Rob Liefeld. All things considered, he and Clermont have earned SHADOWMAN a second chance.

Bryan A. Hollerbach
St. Louis, Missouri
bryan.hollerbach@ey.com

There can be no higher praise of an artist in my mind than to compare him in any way to David Mazzucchelli. I'd walk over broken glass to read his work. The stiffness you see in Klayton's should fade as he gets used to his schedule. It's hard not to be pleased that you liked Serge's work. Serge giggled over the comparison to that ex-*X-Men* writer.

Dear Shadowmen,
It wasn't as bad as I'd feared, but neither did it match up to the claims made for it. That's my assessment of this issue. Specifics:

The art was pretty bog standard superheroics with a touch of horror thrown in. It wasn't as bad as the *Previews* art made it look, you chose my least favorite pages of the issue. It was competent and told the story clearly. It also leaned further to the superhero style than we have seen so far in this incarnation. The cover could have been one from countless magazines (small press & Image) and seems at home with the Acclaim Heroes line in a way that Ashley Wood's stand-outs never did.

The story: It's funny, but Clermont has got comic writing down pretty well in only his first issue. Disappointment over the death of Persephone (or a new creative team saying "what do we do with this character? I know, route one—death and vengeance by the hero as motivation") was partially balanced by Claudine's too-pat-by-half reintroduction. She should never have been killed in the first place but still came back too easily.

If I'd had a preview edition I might not have been so worried about the future direction of the series. I thought it was going down the toilet, but it's not. It's going to the mainstream. What the hell, this is Acclaim Heroes, a superhero line, right? I'm around for next issue and I'll certainly pick up odd issues from here on in to see if I like it more. But the commitment required (I need three issues notice to cancel a book) means that it was impossible for me to take an all-new creative team & direction on trust based on the *Previews* evidence. I doubt that I'm alone.

Paul Hayward
milton keynes
england
comic shop (who never saw a preview either!) Fanboy Comics

Well, we'll take what we can get, Paul. It's good that you liked Serge right off the bat, even if Klayton wasn't quite doing it for you. On the other hand, "superhero with a little *EC* horror" was pretty much what we wanted out of Mr. Krain. I think you'll agree he's getting better and better.

If you're sorry to see Persophone go, at least now Zero might have a more personal stake in Mah's downfall.

ALSO OUT THIS MONTH:

TUROK #2

The ARMORINES arrive to save the President from Turok's deadly attack — or do they? Want to see Clinton do the Lost Land shuffle? With Turok a wanted man (trying to assassinate the President will do that to you), Barry helps Josh design an alternate costume to conceal his identity. Meanwhile, what does Joshua's older sister have to do with all of this? Is she on his side or is there more to her than meets the eye?
By Nicieza, Kayanan and Hillsman

NEXT MONTH

Shadowman won't rest until he's captured Mah, and rescued Claudine! OK, maybe he will. Too bad he's picked the quiet little town of Alvader, Georgia to look for our favorite psycho murderess. They're not too thrilled that Zero's taking a break in their town, and it's not because he's bald. Take a look at the cover and you'll see what's in store for our Voodoo Warrior. If that's not enough, wait 'til you see how he gets around it! It's a tale of how the other side lives in SHADOWMAN #19.

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275 7th Ave New York, NY 10001
aglass@akim.com

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AFTER DARK

A NOTE FROM THE HELP

Yep. It's Day Two out here at our new Long Island offices. And I have to say, it's seeming kind of, well ... familiar. I mean, they've got Taco Bell (the Gorditas are to DIE FOR!!!). They also have lovely women to gaze at. And they even have Fabian here, too! (We just can't get away from him!) So you see, it's not all that different from Manhattan. The only big difference is now I have to sit next to Omar, which means all-nude Fridays and endless Barry White CD playing.

Here's to our new digs! Wish us well!

—Mike Marts,
not as scruffy as Fluffy

To the Shadowmen:

I've been hearing some gossip about an upcoming Shadowman video game. What's the buzz there? And is there any chance of a Quantum & Woody video game? Just imagine, the secret level could be Vincent Van Goat's litterbox!!!

Jeff Armas
Boca Raton, FL

The Shadowman video game is well into the development stage — we've already seen some previews, and boy does it look hot! It should be hitting stores this fall, so be ready to reserve a copy!

Sorry, Jeff, but there aren't any plans for a Quantum & Woody video game just yet. And hey — get yer facts straight! Vincent doesn't sleep in a litter box — he sleeps in Woody's bed!

Dear Gregg and Alex:

Wow! SHADOWMAN #17 far exceeded any expectations I might have had about it. Serge's writing continues to impress, even though he's only been around for two issues so far. Where have you been hiding this guy? You can tell right off the bat that he's not only a voodoo expert, but a talented writer as well! And your advertisements were right on the money: Klayton Krain is definitely an artistic discovery! He's worth far more than gold! Keep him around!

Freddy Colalillo
Lincoln, MS

We're extremely happy with the work that both Klayton and Serge have been producing. And let's not forget the ever-reliable Charles Yoakum, inker extraordinaire!

Dear Editors:

Hey, guys. I noticed your great Infonet page in this month's batch of Acclaim Comics, and I have just one question. Who would win in a fight, Omar or the Pink Gorilla?

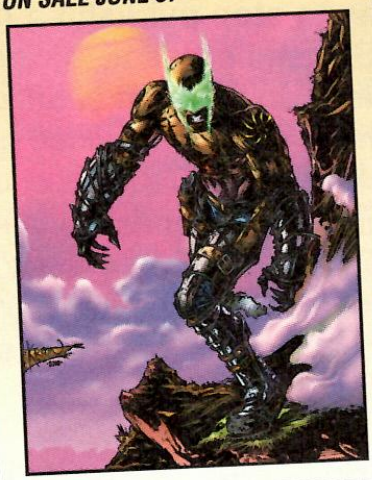
Hugh Jhasze
Aurora, CO

Hmm. That's a tough one, Hugh. I'd say it depends on who's wearing the tutu that day.

NEXT MONTH

Last issue! Looking for clues to finding his kidnapped lover, Shadowman is drawn into the Deadside vortex that is the Vietnam memorial. If you thought that jungle conflict was ugly, wait until you see the Deadside version! And if that weren't enough, some powerful people in the Alignment are trying to tap into the very heart of Deadside, causing Shadowman... *problems.* And who is the man called Blacktower?

By Clermont, Krain and Yoakum
ON SALE JUNE 3!



ALSO OUT THIS MONTH:

MAGNUS #17

Beholders — those see-through investigators from the Real World — are wreaking havoc in the phased future-tech country of Albania. Magnus can't get away from them, not even to spend a couple of quiet moments getting to know Leeja better. An interesting twist on how advances in technology have eroded individual privacy.

By Peyer, Gimenez and Florimonte
IN STORES MAY 13!

TUROK #3

Hunted on Earth for his "attack" on the President, Joshua and Barry's escape into the Lost Land leads to some fun in the village of the four-breasted women and an encounter with the mysterious Lazarus Concordance. Who are they? What is their secret agenda? In order to save trillions, will Joshua sacrifice billions? With no one left he can trust, Turok decides to start doing things his own way...the hard way!

By Nicieza, Kayanan and Hillsman
IN STORES MAY 20!

X-O MANOWAR #20

Unaware that the super-villain called Master Blaster has used his powers to turn the X-O armor into a living time bomb, Donovan agrees to hypnotherapy with his girlfriend Thalia to better understand the armor's new interface. However, the armor has detected the time bomb and has turned all of its internal functions to disarming it — trapping Donovan in his sleep-state! Will X-O wake up in time to blow up? Or will he just die in his sleep?

By McDuffie, Zircher and Mahlstedt
IN STORES MAY 27!

Send your letters to:

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One Acclaim Plaza, Glen Cove NY 11542
mmarts@aklm.com

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Cover layout, logo, and letters page design by **Comicraft's John Roshell**

DARQUE TIDINGS

Hey, people...let's start the first issue of *Darque Passages* right with a...CONTEST!

THE FANTASMIC *ADOPT-A-DARQUE* CONTEST!

Okay. You like *Darque Passages*. I like *Darque Passages*. Rob Haney likes *Darque Passages*. But what of the thousands of people out there who like a good, GORGEOUS, twisted story but a) aren't acquainted with Acclaim Comics yet, b) don't read comics, and/or c) just plain ol' never heard o' Master Darque? Are we to keep them IN THE DARQUE? Or are we to be kind to our fellow human beings and introduce them to *Darque Passages*?

Here's how the contest works. Lend your copy of *Darque Passages* #1 to as many people as would be interested in that sorta book. Better yet, tell them how wonderful it is, refuse to lend it to them, and make them BUY it (HA HA HA be evil...). Then have these new readers send us letters about the issue listing you as their contact. Each letter has to be accompanied with the writer's phone-number or e-mail address, for verification (so no 50 different letters in 50 different handwriting styles, devious ones among us!) The person who gets the most new people to send us letters wins:

- a special black-and-white exclusive preview copy of *Master Darque* Event issue (yummy collectible) signed by Christina Z. and Leonardo Manco!
- a special limited-edition *Master Darque* print
- a copy of *Turok: Timewalker*, the 1st VH2 appearance of Master Darque (hey, anybody out there know this?)
- a copy of *Shadowman* #13, a cool Darque-Brixton appearance

C'mon, get crackin'! Don't make me get STERN with you! (I think editing this book is starting to affect me...)

Now for some letters...

Now this is what I, personally, have been waiting for! In fairy tales I've always found myself siding with the evil stepmother. After all I'm sure she had her reasons for being such a bitch. And that's how I've always felt about Darque. A misunderstood — sure, power hungry — being that is, after all, only doing what he believes in his heart is right. It is only more tragic that his views conflict with the "heroes'" of the time, and it is about time he is given a chance to tell his story.

I have read the one shot and to be honest I would have liked to have seen more of Darque and his sister, but that's not to say I didn't like what I did see. I did. I'm a little unsure on what it's setting up with Brixton and the true nature of the trip he was sent on, but I trust from the teasers at the end that all will be revealed in the mini series or at least in events to come.

Yours,

Brent Robinson

Dear Darque Writers,

I just finished reading the *Master Darque* preview. At first Ididn't think I would enjoy it. I never really got into the old Valiant titles but considering the amazing work your company has been doing lately I thought it was worth a try. I don't understand the new *Shadowman,* which was another reason I was a little nervous about a new mature title. I loved the preview. If this looks this great in black and white it should be truly amazing in color. I truly feel for the characters presented in this issue. I've already signed up for the event book as well as the limited series. It looks like Acclaim has another hit on their hands. Since one of your ongoing titles *(Ninjak,* sob!) will soon be missing is there any chance that *Darque Passages* will be ongoing? Thanks for listening and keep up the great work.

Travis Poole
Union, SC

Dear Darque Tidings,

The *Master Darque* one-shot was incredible! Christina Z., Leonardo Manco, and the rest of the team put together one amazing comic book and I can't wait for the mini-series to begin!

Christina is awesome! I love her stories on *Witchblade* and *The Darkness* but I think this was one of her best yet! The way she writes horror is astonishing. The book had a very gothic tone and was quite enjoyable! I hope Christina will be doing many more Acclaim Comics in the future!

Leonardo Manco was the bomb! His artwork was so cool and frightening at the same time! Panel after panel I was in awe! I am so glad he'll be drawing *Darque Passages* because he did an amazing job on this issue. Tell him to keep up the great work!

I loved seeing Shadowman and Turok in this book! Even though they didn't have a really huge part in the story, it was fun to see them! I also liked Alex's look into the future. The forthcoming war scene was very gripping and it makes me wish 1999 was here now!

Anyway, tell everyone to keep it up! I'll write back after I read *Darque Passages* #1 but until then, take care!

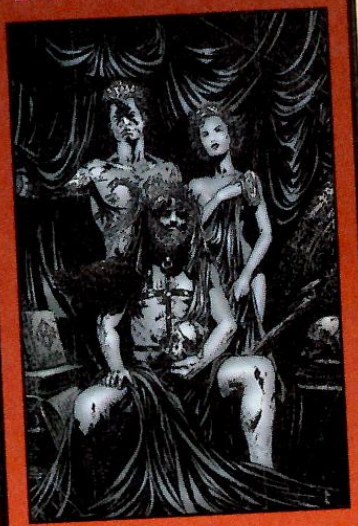
Your pal and biggest fan,

Rob Haney

That's a wrap. See U in thirty.

NEXT MONTH:

Darque plays power-games with the Twins: the prize a soul so twisted it could fuel ARMAGGEDON! "Unholy Night," by Christina Z. and Leonardo Manco



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DARQUE TIDINGS

A SHOT IN THE DARQUE

Leonardo Manco is one of those artists who draws nice-lookin' people. I mean, really delicious! There are certain panels in the *Darque* Event Issue and *Darque Passages* #1 that I just look at, over and over again, in admiration. A couple I cut out, shrink down, laminate, and keep in my wallet for those idle times during my morning subway commute. Here is a list of my personal faves:

Event Issue:

- **page 4, panels 4-5: le *sigh*!**
- **page 14, panel 5: I do not advocate the use of tobacco, but I'll make an exception in his case...bad boy!**
- **page 15, panel 5: heads or tails? Decisions, decisions...**
- **page 30: has Ivar ever looked so good?**
- **pages 31-37: the entire Lost Land sequence...gettin' back to nature!**

***Darque Passages* #1:**

- **page 3, panel 1: just a little off the sides...!**
- **page 9: tasty Darque grin on panel 5, the tastiest!**
- **page 10, panel 4: Brixton, mon amour...**
- **page 24, last panel: Smmmmmokin'!**
- **page 25, panel 5: it's sooooo good to be BAD!**

Kinda makes you think, huh? —Val

Congratulations *on Darque Passages* # 1. The one shot was great, but I was worried if the quality could be maintained. Not only was it maintained, it was surpassed. It is readable and compelling. Imaginative and enthralling. Christina Z deserves applause for advancing the story with each and every word, while fleshing out the characters. The names she comes up with are equally creative. I think my favorite is the Epoch Twins. Can't wait to see what she comes up with next.

In my opinion, the real star of this book is Leonardo Manco. He should be 100 times more famous and acclaimed than he is. He doesn't draw pictures, he creates worlds. And nightmares. There may be no more creative artist working today. After his beautiful demonic work on *Hellstorm*, I looked constantly to see where he would resurface. I bought his work at Acclaim based on his name alone. Naturally I was pleasantly surprised when I found out how well these two creators collaborate.

I see that *Darque Passages* is only slated for 4 issues. What is planned for Z and Manco? Keep them working!! Also, we need Manco posters!

Thanks for a quality and fascinating book.

Dan Cerquitella
Reno, NV

Oh, I think we'll be seein' more of Darque once the limited series is over...because you know what they say: you can't keep a bad man down!

Darque Tidings,

Leonardo Manco is the reason I bought "Master Darque". I haven't liked Christina Z's writing on *Witchblade* or *The Darkness*, and after reading the *Master Darque* one-shot, I still wasn't too impressed. However all that has changed with *Darque Pasages* #1. She has definitely caught my attention with this story. I couldn't possibly give Leonardo any more praise. I followed his work since *Hellstorm*, and he has never failed to impress me. I can't think of another artist, who can render pictures of beauty and horror as well as he does. His art is simply hypnotic.

-Guy!

I see Darque is a jack of all trades. What a interesting life he has! It will be interesting to see Darque explored fully in future issues. *Darque Passages* #1 was a thrill: Christina Z had this story by the throat and shook it around a bit, and as a reader, I was trying to hold on! This whole story is spooky and I felt chills going down my spine as the confrontation of shabby Simon Weathering took place. Leonardo Manco did a magnificent job with the artwork in this comic book. It has a moody, creepy feel, but done in a way that it fits perfectly with the story. I couldn't believe the gorgeous rooms in Sandria's Palace. Wow! I felt like I was walking into that room, very well done and the details were incredible. Besides having a spooky feel, this story has an erotic feel to it too, which is very diverse and keeps the reader wanting more. Darque is suave and smooth and I like his character. The intensity of this story built up to a climatic pivotal spin as Darque met up with the awesome Epoch Twins, and knowing that they were siphoning Darques' energy as it was being drained by the vortex, and Darque losing his necrotantric energies, was frightening indeed! Looks like another Valiant hit! Talk to you next issue!

Sincerely yours,
Paul Dale Roberts, Publisher
Peoples' Comic Book Newsletter
http://www.twmgrafix.com/jazma

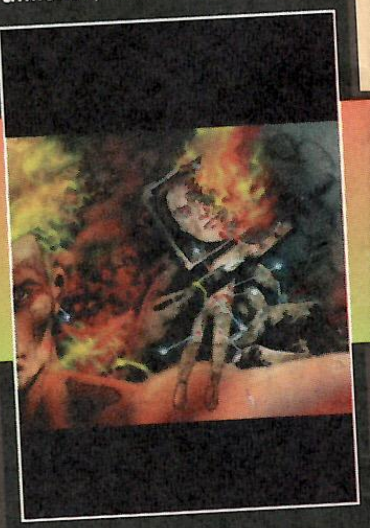
ALSO OUT THIS MONTH:

SHADOWMAN #15:
Zero takes a stroll through Deadside...Brute fires up the grill for some Shadow-Meat...and the Judge meets his maker! "The Hoodoo Bash, Part III" *by Delano, Foreman, and Adlard*

MAGNUS #13
Albania's just a little bit gone right now...blown clear out of hero to...somewhere else. "Be Here Now" *by Peyer, Gimenez, and Florimonte*

NEXT MONTH:

Sandria, Brixton, and the mysterious Roses struggle to help Darque stay one step ahead of the deadly Epoch Twins. But when the fabric of time itself begins to fray, how long can Darque hold back the shadows? *By Christina Z and Leonardo Manco.*



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DARQUE TIDINGS

A SHOT IN THE DARQUE

Alexandre Darque is not your everyday, run-of-the-mill superhero... that's sorta obvious. But can he be called "hero" at all? Can he take his place among X-O and Turok and Magnus as a defender of the Acclaim Universe? Or is he only out for himself, a creature "willing to glorify" the "religious and political position" of a madman in order to get a drop o' soul? These are things I think about while I peel off my contact lenses at 11:00 at night. Perhaps I can get a little closer to the answer by asking a few people in the know...

"I see Darque as someone trapped between good and bad. Right now, he's the personification of selfishness, but the interesting thing about the character is that all his driving motivation, all his yearning for personal power and control over Heaven and Hell, may ultimately lead him—even force him—to make the choice of good over bad. How we classify him now might drastically change two years from now. That's interesting and that's why I like him so much."

—Fabian N icieza

"Is Darque a hero? Tough call: in my book, heroism is something that happens to you when most of your instincts are yelling "Duck!" but you Pull That Little Old Lady Out Of The Crossfire nonetheless. I'd rather have Darque in my corner in the crisis at the World's End, it's true. But I'm a little worried: what happens after he's saved the world and everything's cool again... he's used to the thrill and the danger of collecting souls. Absolute power does corrupt, y'know."

—Madeleine Robins
editor of *Darque Passages*

"Is Alex Darque a hero? I honestly don't believe so, and I seriously doubt the character would ever think of himself that way. True heroism begins with an unselfish act... the giving of yourself to a greater cause or ideal. But so much evil has been done in the name of a cause that the line between hero and fanatic can sometimes become blurred. What separates them is a personal code of ethics, a set of guidelines that the hero cannot and will not violate. It may be the refusal to take a life, or living up to a specific moral and ethical code. Whatever it is, these personal guidelines are what sets the hero apart from others, and violating them is a sure road to Hell."

—James Perham
writer of the *Harbinger* Event

"There's a tree, in a valley. Darque, the anti-hero stands near it. Leaves fall. Darque kills a bunny. Cool."

—Omar "Not Much Help In Matters Of Philosophical Import" Banmally
assistant editor on *Troublemakers*, *Quantum and Woody*, and *Turok*.

Is Darque, with his fight against the end of the world, a bigger hero than Quantum or Turok? Or does Alexandre's own, unconventional code of morality preclude him from hero status?

I mean...if the President makes a State of the Union address about important domestic issues, and meanwhile all these allegations are flying around about his personal life...do the allegations make his concern about health care or education any less valid, less sincere?

Personally, I don't think so. And I think "heroism" is not something that can be sustained 24-hours-a-day, 7 days a week. I'm sure Turok has "bad days" when he jay-walks or litters, or Quantum must have had an evil moment when he did something like purchase a cookbook on 101 ways to Prepare Goat.

I definitely regard Darque as a hero, of a sort...and the beauty of his character is that he forces us to expand our perception of what that term means.

And he's also really cute.

—Val

ALSO OUT THIS MONTH:

SHADOWMAN #16
Having captured Shadowman, the coven that made him rips the Mask of Shadows right out of his chest! But he's far from helpless, and to the coven's dismay, Shadowman unleashes a beast he never knew he had! *By Clermont, Krain, and Temujin.*

TROUBLEMAKERS #15
Parker Matthews is alive. Or is he? How does Parker feel about his new existence? And how does his own mother feel about the fact that Joshua Matthews always knew that all the TROUBLEMAKERS would evolve into this? *By Nicieza, West, and Davis.*

Last, but not least, did anyone but me notice the smiley face on the spine of the book closest to the edge of the last page?
-Guy!

The answer to the cover thing is this: Leonardo had this really cool painted cover set he wanted to do, where all the issues would fit together to produce one big painting of a crucified Darque. This was going to take time...so he made us some pen-and-ink covers to tide us over for ads and stuff like that.

By the way, I took apart my issue of *Darque* #2, starting with the staples, going thru it page-by-page, and I could not find the smiley face. I did this 30 times just in case I missed something. Then Madeleine threw a couple of heavy desk implements at me...see the trouble you've caused?

NEXT MONTH:

Sandria is in deadly peril; the barriers between worlds are crumbling; and an army of demons are waiting to enforce the Epoch Twins' claim to rule. Even the power Darque has consumed for centuries may not be enough to hold back the tides of Hell—unless... There's a secret player Darque needs on his side—before it's too late!

Darque Tidings,

Well, issue 2 is here and I must admit the story confused me a little (nothing that re-reading the issue didn't cure). Christina Z. has stepped up the pace quite nicely (biting open his own wrists was a nice touch). My only problem is that I'm not buying Alexandre as the big time manipulator that he's been made out to be. Yes, we've seen him use a couple of people to get things, but I was was expecting something more along the lines of Oreck (I'll miss *Bloodshot*). What I mean by that is having a whole network of people bribed/ blackmailed ready to do whatever he asks. There was a show on the Fox Network a couple of years ago called *Prophet*. Now HE was the manipulator that Alexandre should be.

Other than that I'm enjoying the supernatural aspect of the series. There's not that many good supernatural/ horror type books out there and this one is in the top two. What happened to the art that was in the January advertisments for the book? Is it an alternate cover or were there some other issues (no pun intended) surrounding the decision not to use that cover?

Send your letters to:

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Please include your name and address, and the name and city of your comic shop. Addresses will be withheld upon request.

Cover layout, logo, and letters page design by COMICRAFT

DARQUE TIDINGS

Well, that's it...the movie's over...time to go home...

There's nothing more to see here...go home...

What are you still doing here?

What? You want MORE?

Hah! I know I couldn't fool you...by this time you've realized that you CAN'T KEEP A BAD MAN DOWN!

So, what's next for Darque?

- In September all four fabulous issues of *Darque Passages*, as well as the hard-to-get *Master Darque* Event will be collected in one handy-dandy trade-paperback...(I love those trade paperbacks because they look like "real" books, sits on a shelf like "real" books, but they're actually wicked, wicked COMIC BOOKS! HA!)
- Darque will be appearing in this very month's *Shadowman* #17! Check out hot young newcomer Klayton Krain's rendering of Alexandre Darque below and at right, then give *Shadowman* #17 a try.
- According to *Shadowman* assistant editor Alex(andre?) Glass, Darque will be playing a very important role in *Shadowman:*

"Master Darque becomes part of the Charon Alignment, a group of powerful and intelligent individuals devoted to the scientific exploration and ultimate exploitation of "The Gray Zone," which we know as Deadside. Darque seeks to understand the power of the Alignment's enigmatic leader, Blacktower. His wariness of this sorcerer-scientist's power may cause him to form an uneasy alliance with Shadowman, or may send him on a mission for the Voodoo warrior's total destruction." So check out *Shadowman* #'s 20-21 for more Darque stuff!

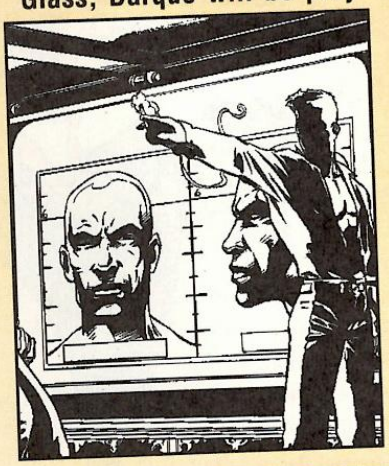
- HOT HOT HOT burning HOT artist Leonardo Manco will be back with an issue of the

highly-anticipated *Final Solution* limited series, out this summer...you cannot miss this!!!!! His art is gorgeous!!!!! (We don't need to tell you that, do we?)

- Now, the big question... IS DARQUE COMING BACK SOON? We're keeping the future open for such a possibility...what could really help us out is feedback from YOU, the readers. It can be as simple as an e-mail. E-mail is like, the EASIEST thing you could do... just say: "hey, I'd like to see more Darque," or: "no, Darque is too immoral, keep him out of our small, quiet town, he makes me think weird thoughts." Anything. And this goes for all the books in our line. Your input matters to us. And it could very well change the Acclaim Universe.

See U Later!

— Val



ALSO OUT THIS MONTH:

SHADOWMAN #17

Zero speeds along the vengeance trail seeking to regain the Mask of Shadows, and his sanity! This two-parter, introducing a brand-new writer/artist team, spirals to an explosive conclusion right here in Old New Orleans!

By Clermont, Krain, and Temujin

— On Sale March 4!

ETERNAL WARRIORS QUARTERLY: MOG

The mysterious father of Ivar, Aram and Gilad has returned. Where has Mog been? What does he want? The ramifications of his return will stagger the Acclaim Universe in the months to come!

By Holcomb, Morales, and Floyd

— On Sale March 25!

Send your letters to:

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Please include your name and address, and the name and city of your comic shop. Addresses will be withheld upon request.

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